NATION

Armstrong murder accused shot dead in TN

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Spicejet faces another insolvency plea from creditor

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Finally I'm glad to win after 20 yrs: GM Harika

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 | TUESDAY | BENGALURU | 19 RABI'L, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 243 | Pages: 8

WE ARE HIRING

REPORTERS
WEB-EDITOR
SUB-EDITOR

Journalism degree preferred but not essential.

Reporter: 5-6 years experience.

Web-editor: 2-4 years experience.

Sub editors freshers welcome.

SEND YOUR CV TO:

hr.salarnews@gmail.com
anushreeirwin@gmail.com

Watching child porn offence under POCSO: SC

Top court says Madras High Court made 'egregious error'

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

In a path-breaking judgment, the Supreme Court on Monday held mere possession of any child pornographic material will constitute offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) and the IT laws even if they are not disseminated further.

Observing that "sexual exploitation of children is a pervasive and deeply rooted issue that has plagued societies worldwide and has been a matter of serious concern in India", the top court termed as "egregious" the verdict of the Madras High Court on the issue and set it aside.

On 11 January, the high court had quashed the criminal proceedings against a 28-year-old man charged with downloading pornographic content involving children on his mobile phone, saying mere possession and downloading of such pornographic materials did not constitute offences under POCSO Act and the Information Technology (IT) Act. "We have reached the conclusion that the High Court committed an egregious error in passing the impugned judgment. We are left with no other option but to set aside the impugned judgment... and restore the criminal proceedings... to the court of Sessions Judge, Mahila Neethi Mandram (Fast Track Court), Tiruvallur District," the top court said.

On 11 January, Madras High Court had quashed criminal proceedings against a man charged with downloading porn involving children **PHOTO: PTI**

While passing a slew of directions and suggestions on the sensitive issue, a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala asked Parliament to seriously consider bringing an amendment to the POCSO Act for substituting the term "child pornography" with "child sexual exploitative and abuse material" with a view to reflect more accurately the reality of such offences.

It said sub-section (1) of section 15 penalises "the failure to delete, destroy or report any child pornographic material that has been found to be stored or in possession of any person with an intention to share or transmit the same".

Referring to mens-rea (criminal motive), an essential ingredient of any ordinary crime, it said the intention required under the POCSO provision is to be gathered from actus reus (actual act) itself. Dealing further, it said the other relevant provision penalises both the actual transmission, propagation, display or distribution of any child pornography as-well as the facilitation of any of such acts. The section 15 of the POCSO Act provides different punishments of varying jail terms or fine or both. Section 15 (1), which deals with possession of child pornographic material, provides for a minimum fine of Rs 5,000 which may extend to Rs 10,000. —*PTI*

Palestine's President Mahmoud Abbas with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting, in New York on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

In US, Modi meets Palestinian Prez, expresses 'concern'

NEW YORK, 23 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas here and expressed deep concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza, reaffirming India's support for the early restoration of peace and stability in the region.

Modi is in New York on the second leg of his three-day US visit and met the leader on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session on Sunday. "Met President Mahmoud Abbas in New York. Reiterated India's support for early restoration of peace and stability in the region. Exchanged views of further strengthening long-standing friendship with the people of Palestine," Modi said in a post on X. Modi "expressed deep concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza and reaffirmed India's continued support to the people of Palestine," the post added.

Modi arrived in New York on Saturday after attending the Quad Leaders' Summit in Wilmington, Delaware, where he also had bilateral discussions with US President Joe Biden. Modi addressed thousands of members of the Indian-American community at the 'Modi&US' mega community event in Long Island Sunday afternoon. He also interacted with the top tech leaders and CEOs of the US in a roundtable conference. Later in the day, he held bilateral discussions with world leaders. India has underscored its commitment towards a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the Israel-Palestine issue and reiterated that only a two-state solution achieved through direct and meaningful negotiations between both sides will lead to enduring peace. PTI

Modi held separate talks with the Nepalese counterpart KP Sharma Oli. "Had a very good meeting with Prime Minister KP Oli in New York. The India-Nepal friendship is very robust and we look forward to adding even more momentum to our ties. Our talks focused on issues such as energy, technology and trade," Modi said in a post on X. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

'Laapataa Ladies' picked as India's entry for Oscars

CHENNAI, 23 SEPT

Kiran Rao's 'Laapataa Ladies' has been picked as India's official entry for Oscars 2025, the Film Federation of India announced here on Monday. The Hindi film, a light-hearted satire on patriarchy, was chosen from a list of 29 films, including Bollywood hit 'Animal', Malayalam National Award winner 'Aattam' and Cannes winner 'All We Imagine As Light'. Produced by Aamir Khan and Rao, the movie got the best international film category at the Academy Awards. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Sensex, Nifty hit new record closing high levels

MUMBAI, 23 SEPT

Domestic equity indices Sensex and Nifty scaled their new record closing high levels on Monday, helped by strong foreign fund inflows and a largely firm trend in Asian markets. Rallying for the third day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 384.30 points, or 0.45 per cent, to settle at an all-time high of 84,928.61. During the day, it soared 436.22 points, or 0.51 per cent, to hit a fresh lifetime intra-day peak of 84,980.53. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 7

MUDA CASE

K'taka HC to pronounce verdict on CM's plea today

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

Karnataka High Court on Tuesday will pronounce its order on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the legality of Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's approval for investigation against him in Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case.

The High Court on 12 September completed its hearing in the case, and reserved its orders, while extending its 19 August interim order directing the special court for people's representatives that was slated to hear complaints against him in the case, to defer its proceedings till the disposal of the petition. The case is listed for pronouncement of order before the single judge bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna on Tuesday.

High Court; Siddaramaiah

PHOTOS: PTI

The Governor on 16 August accorded sanction under Section 17A of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 218 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for the commission of the alleged offences as mentioned in the petitions submitted to him by complainants Pradeep Kumar SP, TJ Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna.

On 19 August, Siddaramaiah moved the High Court challenging the legality of the Governor's order. In the petition, the Chief Minister submitted that the sanction order was issued without due application of mind, in violation of statutory mandates, and contrary to constitutional principles, including the advice of the Council of Ministers, which is binding under Article 163 of the Constitution of India. —*PTI*

Foxconn, Stellantis to set up R&D hub in Bengaluru

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Foxconn-backed automotive technology company SiliconAuto has set up its research and development centre in Bengaluru which will focus on semiconductor product design and system-on-chip development for the automotive sector.

SiliconAuto is a joint venture between the Netherlands-based Stellantis NV and Hon Hai Technology Group (Foxconn). "This new centre embodies SiliconAuto's commitment to innovation and excellence in the automotive industry. Our India team is set to drive forward our vision of a smarter and safer future for transportation. Bangalore, with its rich talent pool and thriving tech ecosystem, is the perfect location for our new design centre," SiliconAuto CEO, Gene Liu said in a statement. —*PTI*

Laddu row: Centre issues show cause notice to ghee supplier

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

In the wake of Tirupati Laddu adulteration allegations, the FSSAI has issued a show cause notice to a Tamil Nadu-based firm for supplying substandard ghee to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam, official sources said on Monday.

In the notice, the food regulator asked A R Diary Food Private Ltd why its central licence should not be suspended for contravention of the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulation, 2011. According to the notice, FSSAI said it received information from The Director of the Institute of Preventive Medicine, Mangalagiri, that AR Diary Food Private Ltd in Dindigul was one of the suppliers of Ghee to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) since last four years. The ghee procurement committee of TTD has sent all the samples supplied to TTD for testing to NDDB CALF Lab at Anand, Gujarat. "By virtue of the above non-conformance of the product "Ghee" manufactured by your firm which is not meeting the standards, you have contravened the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, Rules and Regulations made there under.

PHOTO: FB

The regulator asked the firm to send its reply by September 23 failing which it said suitable action will be initiated as per the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 and Regulations. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Badlapur sexual assault accused shot dead

MUMBAI, 23 SEPT

- He was rushed to a hospital in Kalwa where he succumbed to his injuries, the official said

The man accused of sexually assaulting two girls at a school in Badlapur town of Maharashtra died in retaliatory firing by police after he snatched a cop's gun and opened fire, an official said on Monday.

Akshay Shinde, who worked as a sweeper in the school, snatched the revolver of one of the policemen taking him from Taloja jail to Badlapur on Monday, the official said.

He was rushed to a hospital in Kalwa where he succumbed to his injuries, the official said. An assistant police inspector, injured in the firing by Shinde, is undergoing treatment at the hospital, he added.

When the vehicle reached near Mumbra bypass, Shinde snatched the revolver of one of the officers in the vehicle and fired two to three rounds, injuring the officer. In response, another officer opened fire on Shinde, injuring him.

Massive protests erupted on streets and at local railway station last month after two minor girls were allegedly sexually assaulted by Shinde at the toilet of the school in Thane district. The two minors were allegedly abused in the school toilet on 12 August. The accused was arrested on 17 August.

On 3 September, Bombay High Court told the police to build a "watertight" case and do not file a charge sheet hurriedly under public pressure. —*PTI*

India reports first Mpox Clade 1b case in Kerala

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

India has reported the first case of the Mpox strain, which led to the WHO declaring it a public health emergency last month, in a patient from Kerala who had tested positive last week, official sources said on Monday.

They said Clade 1b strain has been detected in a 38-year-old man from Malappuram district who had recently returned from the United Arab Emirates.

The patient is stable, the sources said, adding "this was the first case of the current strain that led to the World Health Organisation declaring Mpox a public health emergency last month for a second time". The earlier case of Mpox emerged in the national capital was a 26-year-old resident of Haryana's Hisar who has tested positive for the previous West African Clade 2. Kerala Health minister Veena George has already appealed to the public, including those returning from abroad with any symptoms, to inform the health department and seek treatment at the earliest.

PHOTO: PTI

Mpox typically manifests itself with fever, rash and swollen lymph nodes and may lead to a range of medical complications. —*PTI*

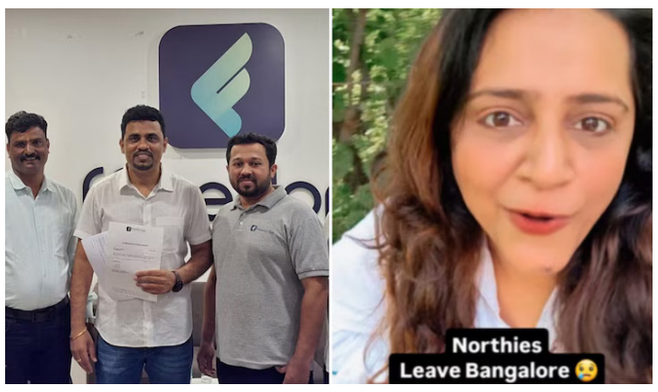
'IF NORTHIES LEAVE B'LURU'

Influencer fired for 'anti-Kannada' post

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

Sugandh Sharma, a social media influencer who uploaded a reel that Bengaluru would become empty if North Indians leave the City, has been fired by her employer, an IT company, and has been summoned to Koramangala police station.

On Monday, a group of pro-Kannada activists visited the office of Sharma on Monday and submitted a complaint demanding action against her. Rupesh Rajanna, a pro-Kannada activist who visited her office, said in a post on X: "We have been visiting Sugandha Sharma's office over the last two days to seek information about her and talk to the officials there."



A group of pro-Kannada activists visit the office of Sugandh Sharma and submitted a complaint demanding action against her **PHOTO: SALAR**

Rajanna said a complaint has been filed against her at Koramangala police station on behalf of Yukave Youth Group Rajanna. Koramangala police, who have asked her to report at the station on Tuesday, said Sharma will be warned not to incite hate.

Sharma, who has about 17,000 followers on Instagram, sparked outrage from social media users after one of her reels on Bengaluru she had posted three days ago went viral. The woman from North India said she moved to the City three years ago in search of fame, money and a life partner. "You guys keep saying: 'you northies go back,' if we all really leave Bengaluru, your city would become empty," she said in the reel.

Reacting to the video, enraged Instagram users asked Sharma to leave the City and stop spreading hate. —*Salar News*

Secularism is European concept: TN Governor Ravi

CHENNAI, 23 SEPT

Secularism is a European concept evolved after a conflict between the church and the king whereas Bharat is a dharma-centric nation and therefore, it was not part of the Constitution, but added during the Emergency by "one insecure prime minister", Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi has said. "What does secularism mean? Secularism is a European concept," he said.

During emergency, "one insecure Prime Minister," introduced secularism in the Constitution in order to appease some sections of people, he alleged. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister during the emergency. —*PTI*

1,000 drunk driving cases in 1 week in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

In a City-wide special operation against drunk driving, Bengaluru Traffic Police registered 1,146 cases between 16 September and 22 September. The week-long campaign was aimed at curbing the rising menace of driving under the influence of alcohol and ensuring road safety. During the operation, traffic police officials checked a total of 75,800 vehicles across various parts of the city. Out of these, 1,146 drivers and riders were found guilty of driving while intoxicated. The offenders had their driving licenses confiscated and sent to the respective regional transport offices for suspension. The authorities emphasised that such operations are crucial to promoting awareness about road safety and enforcing strict adherence to traffic rules. City Traffic Police have announced that similar operations will continue in the coming weeks, targeting violations such as driving under the influence, speeding, and not following traffic rules. —*Salar News*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

African among 2 held with Rs 1 cr worth of drugs

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

The CCB Police have arrested two individuals, Michael Okely, an African national, and Sahana from Bengaluru, for allegedly peddling drugs at Yerappanahalli village in Bengaluru Rural district on Monday. The duo was found in possession of over Rs 1 crore worth of drugs, including more than one kilogram of MDMA. Michael, who came to India on a business visa in 2018, and Sahana, his associate, were living together and using their residence as a hub for drug distribution. The arrests were made following a tip-off from a previously detained drug peddler in July, which led the CCB police to lay a trap for Michael. During the raid, authorities seized three mobile phones and two electronic weighing machines. —*Salar News*

Hurt 'Mooga Huli' Tiger recovering at Bannerghatta

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

Eleven-year-old male tiger, known as 'Mooga Huli', is recovering steadily at Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP) after undergoing critical treatment for injuries sustained during a territorial fight. Mooga was relocated from Nagarahole National Park to BBP on Saturday. His recent injuries, caused by another territorial battle, left him unable to hunt, forcing him to venture close to human settlements in search of food. Dr Vinay Shimoga, one of the attending veterinarians at BBP, said "Mooga's injuries are a few months old, due to which the infections were severe. He is responding well to the treatment and has started moving around, which is a positive sign." —*Salar News*

Bannerghatta Park opens registrations for its 'Zoo Club'

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

Bannerghatta Biological Park's Zoo Club will begin on 13 October, according to Surya Sen, director of Bannerghatta Biological Park. "Every Sunday, for 15 Sundays, from 10am to 1pm, youngsters in the age group of 10 to 18 years will get a glimpse of wildlife conservation, management, breeding and behaviour," added Sen. Sen said usually, students from Class 7 and above participate in Zoo Club. This year, the registration is open till 6 October and the application form is available at https://bannerughattabiopark.org/education.html. Students will be charged a registration fee of Rs 1,000. Government school children are exempt from it. —*PTI*

Prime accused in woman's murder is from Bengal: HM

'Police teams fan across India, accused will be nabbed soon'

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

The prime accused in the murder of a 29-year-old woman, whose body was chopped into 50 pieces and stored in a refrigerator, has been identified and is from West Bengal, Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Monday and assured that the culprit will be nabbed soon.

National Commission for Women (NCW) has directed State Police to expedite the arrest of all individuals involved in the crime and called for a report within three days.

In the case that has brought back memories of the infamous Shraddha Walkar killing, Mahalakshmi's body was found on Saturday in the refrigerator in her flat at Vyalikaval here.

"Already some information has been collected, which I cannot reveal now...but we will soon nab those involved in it...an individual-- they say is the one (involved), but unless we have more information, we can't really confirm," Parameshwara said.

The maggot-infested body of Mahalakshmi was discovered by her mother and elder sister at her home on Saturday. The deceased woman's estranged husband has expressed suspicion about a man known to her.

City Police Commissioner B Dayananda said police are investigating the murder from all angles. "We are yet to apprehend the prime suspect. As and when the person is caught and the interrogation is done, then we will be able to provide further details," he said. According to police sources, several investigation teams have been formed to trace the culprits. Some teams have fanned out to various parts of India to arrest those involved in the crime.

The body of Mahalakshmi (inset) was found on Saturday in the refrigerator in her flat at Vyalikaval in Bengaluru PHOTO:PTI

Family demands justice

Meanwhile, Mahalakshmi's family demanded justice. "The owner of the building informed me that there was a foul smell coming from the house. When I came and opened the door I saw the body of Mahalakshmi cut into pieces. I saw her for the last time at Rakshabandhan festival. Since then her phone has been switched off," Mahalakshmi's mother Meena Rana said.

Seeking stringent punishment for the accused, the victim's elder sister said, "Who cuts a woman into pieces like this? I saw her a year ago. Now I saw her in pieces."

About women's safety in the City, Parameshwara said many precautions and measures were already taken for the safety of women in Bengaluru. "The Nirbhaya programme has been implemented...we have installed CCTVs. We have taken steps, but still, we don't know how to term these (incidents)...We have already alerted all the police stations to be extra careful about women's safety....we need to put more effort into this, and we will do it," he said. –*Agencies*

BJP: KANNADIGAS NOT SAFE IN HITLER-LED GOVT

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) launched a scathing attack on the Congress-led State government over the killing of a woman whose body parts were found stored in a refrigerator in Bengaluru and said the Kannadigas are no longer safe in this "Hitler-led Siddaramaiah".

"Under @INCKarnataka rule, appeasement policies have led to a complete collapse of law and order.

The brutal murder of Mahalakshmi by Ashraf is a clear reminder that Kannadigas are no longer safe in this Hitler-led @siddaramaiah government," BJP's Karnataka unit posted on X.

BJP alleged that Congress opposed the anti-love jihad laws to please their vote bank.

"We urge Congress ministers not to downplay this as a mere accident or prank to appease culprits and please your vote bank. Balak Buddi @RahulGandhi, while you weep for Hamas terrorists, here's something for you to consider," BJP wrote on X. -*ANI*

'TRIVIAL MATTERS'

Govt examining Guv's letters: Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot is writing letters seeking reports on "trivial matters", and State government was examining them.

Questioning BJP for their alleged inaction while in power in connection with Justice HS Kempanna Commission's report on the alleged Arkavathy Layout scam, he said the government will take a decision on the report, after considering various aspects.

The Governor has written to Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh seeking a copy of the Kempanna Commission's report and other related information into the alleged Arkavathy Layout denotification scam, in which Siddaramaiah was accused of denotifying land during his first term.

"BJP was there (in power) for four years. Why didn't they do it? They were in power, why didn't they place it (report) before the Assembly? Now CT Ravi (BJP MLC) has written a letter (to Governor). He was a minister (in BJP govt). Why didn't they do it then?" Siddaramaiah said.

Justice Kempanna Commission was constituted in 2014 during Siddaramaiah's first stint as the chief minister. Its report was submitted in 2017, when Siddaramaiah was still the CM, but was not made public. —*PTI*

BJP MP SIROYA SLAMS CONG FOR TARGETING GEHLOT

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

BJP MP Lahar Singh Siroya on Monday slammed the ruling Congress in Karnataka for targeting Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot.

In a statement, Siroya said when the cases are piling up before the Governor, the Congress leaders are casting aspersions on Gehlot.

"It is the old trick of the Congress party to attack the Constitutional authorities when their misdeeds are caught and when they are in trouble. In Karnataka, the party's senior leaders, including Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, have started targeting the Governor as many of their corruption cases pile up before him," Siroya said in his statement.

He alleged that Siddaramiaah, in his first term as the CM, had defanged the Lokayukta and started the anti-corruption unit to "totally escape oversight and accountability".

The courts had to later restore the Lokayukta, Siroya said. The BJP leaders have faced the wrath of the Lokayukta, but they never tried to dismantle the institution or manipulate it, he added. —*PTI*

Courts grant bail to Kesava, 2 others in Renukaswamy case

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

A Sessions Court here granted bail to two accused, Nikhil Naik and Karthik in the Renukaswamy murder case. Earlier on Monday, High Court granted bail to another accused, Keshava Murthy.

Meanwhile, the 57th Magistrate Court, Bengaluru, on Monday, adjourned the hearing for the bail petition of actor Darshan Thoogudeepa till 27 September and his friend and another accused Pavithra Gowda's till 25 September in the Renukaswamy murder case.

Earlier this month, Bengaluru police submitted a charge sheet in a secure box to the court against 17 accused in the Renukaswamy murder case, including star Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and his friend Pavithra Gowda, Bengaluru Police said.

Renukaswamy PHOTO: PTI

Commissioner of Police, Bengaluru B Dayananda, said that a 3,991-page charge sheet, which includes seven volumes and 10 files, has been submitted to the 24th Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

The police statement said that a strong charge sheet had been prepared after a thorough investigation of the case from all angles.

Earlier, actor Darshan was shifted to Bellary Jail after his purported photograph of hanging out with three others, including a rowdy-sheeter, in the lawns of Parappana Agrahara Central Jail in Karnataka went viral.

Karnataka government earlier suspended seven prison officials after purported picture of Darshan from the jail circulated online. —*ANI*

CERT-IN & SISA LAUNCH AI CERTIFICATION

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

A first of its kind AI security certification programme in India was launched here on Monday. Certified Security Professional for Artificial Intelligence is a project between Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India and SISA, a global leader in forensics driven Cyber Security. Sanjay Bahl, Director General of CERT-In, said the programme will enrich the skills to adapt and deploy secure and trustworthy AI in work environments. —*PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launched 65 new ambulances under 'Emergency Flight' scheme in Bengaluru on Monday. This new initiative, launched also by Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, equips ambulances with advanced life support technologies, ensuring timely care and treatment for accident victims. These ambulances will be stationed at taluk and district hospitals and accident hotspots in the State. The fleet includes 26 ambulances with Advanced Life Support technology and 39 ambulances equipped with Basic Life Support. PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

IISC in the dock over India-Israel summit

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

- The protesters expressed their dissent to the involvement of IISC in supporting the summit during these strife torn times.

Activists and academicians protested against Indian Institute of Science (IISC), Bengaluru, on Monday condemning the institution for organising India-Israel Business Summit in the wake of the present violence in Palestine and Lebanon. The protest was organised by Bengaluru Palestine Solidarity (BPS).

The protesters expressed their dissent to the involvement of IISC tying up with other institutions such as IIM Bengaluru, IIIT Bengaluru, NIAS and the State government in supporting the summit during these strife torn times.

The summit by Think India, Indian Chamber of International Business, and Mysuru Lancers Heritage Foundation is all set to deliberate on bilateral trade and investments between India and Israel with special focus on defence, cyber security, start-ups and venture capital and sustainable technology.

Shouting slogans the protesters vented their anger at IISC's bid to host the event considering the ongoing conflict in which hundreds of lives were being lost in Gaza and Lebanon. BPS also lashed out at the police. —*Salar News*

KEEPING TRACK

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar inspects the work of Cauvery 5th stage work to provide drinking water to 110 areas that comes under BBMP, in Bengaluru on Monday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

WON'T ALLOW MAHISHA DASARA: PRATAP SIMHA

MYSURU, 23 SEPT

Former member of parliament and BJP leader Pratap Simha on Monday warned of holding 'Chamundi Betta Chalo' protest if Mahisha Dasara celebrations were held atop Chamundi Hills during Navarathri celebrations this year.

of parliament and BJP leader Pratap Simha on Monday warned of holding 'Chamundi Betta Chalo' protest if Mahisha Dasara celebrations were held atop Chamundi Hills during Navarathri celebrations this year.

"I hope district administration will not permit it to hold the event this year as it is against our tradition and customs," he said. "The committee members must stop politicising the issue." —*Salar News*

Woman destroys Onam Pookalam made by kids

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

A woman in Bengaluru is facing severe criticism after a video surfaced showing her destroying a Pookalam (floral carpet) arranged by children to celebrate Onam. The incident took place in Monarch Serenity Apartment Complex, located in Hegde Nagar, East Bengaluru.

In the viral video, the woman, identified by residents as Simi Nair, can be seen arguing with other residents in a mix of English and Malayalam before proceeding to ruin the Pookalam.

According to the residents, it had taken the children several hours to arrange the intricate floral pattern. "What she did was deeply hurtful," a software engineer staying at the apartment complex told Salar News. Another resident and a member of the residents' association, Karthik Kumar, said, "We have not taken any action against her nor given a complaint of any sort. We are trying to resolve this within our community."

While the exact reasons behind the woman's actions remain unclear, her behaviour has triggered a flurry of reactions online. One user on X named Rithik commented, "How much hate on other's community/religion festivals is growing nowadays." Another user named Pavan Uppoju, commented "Where is our education, at this age, she will not be happy and not let others be happy, soft beautiful flowers n good smell all around, how can one do this, oh god save this mother." –*Salar News*

COURT PROCEEDINGS

HC tightens rules on live-streaming

BENGALURU, 23 SEPT

Karnataka High Court has introduced strict guidelines for live-streaming of judicial proceedings to prevent unauthorised sharing of clips on social media platforms.

The incident stems from remarks made by a single judge recently. These comments, made during a live-streamed hearing, sparked widespread criticism after video clips went viral.

To address this, High Court has issued a note titled, "Prohibitions and Restrictions on Usage of the Recording or Live Stream," which is now displayed at the beginning of live-streamed sessions.

The note prohibits any unauthorised recording, sharing, or dissemination of live-streamed proceedings and archival data, including on social media and messaging platforms. Only authorised individuals or entities are permitted to handle such recordings.

The new rules stem from controversial remarks made by a judge during a live-streamed hearing, sparking widespread criticism PHOTO: PTI

The court also warned that anyone found violating these rules would face legal consequences under the Indian Copyright Act, 1957, the Information Technology Act, 2000, and contempt of court laws.

Rule 10(2) of the Karnataka Rules on Live Streaming and Recording of Court Proceedings, 2021, reinforces these restrictions by barring the use of recording devices by unauthorized individuals during hearings.

The changes come after Justice V Srishananda's remarks, which led to public backlash, prompting the judge to express regret.

Following media reports, the Supreme Court has taken note of the issue and asked the High Court Registrar General to file a detailed report on the matter.

The Advocates' Association of Bengaluru has also called for a temporary halt on live-streaming and urged judges to exercise greater sensitivity during proceedings.

They raised concerns that certain YouTube channels had exaggerated the judge's comments. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

RG Kar case: WB BJP 'cleanse' police stations over lapses

KOLKATA, 23 SEPT

Activists of BJP's women wing on Monday thronged various police stations in West Bengal to "cleanse" them as part of their protest against the alleged lapses in the probe into the rape-murder of a doctor at the state-run RG Kar hospital here last month. BJP leaders Agnimitra Paul and Locket Chatterjee along with other party activists alleged that police stations lost their "purity" after the police personnel were found involved in alleged wrongdoings. They held protests in front of the police stations sprinkling holy water of the Ganga river and applying cow dung using broomsticks. Paul said, "We have come to the police station at Behala in south Kolkata as a symbolic protest to purify it." *—PTI*

MNS chief Raj Thackeray meets CM Shinde

MUMBAI, 23 SEPT

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray met Chief Minister Eknath Shinde at the latter's residence here on Monday. The meeting assumes significance as the State Assembly elections are just around the corner. This was Thackeray's second visit to the Chief Minister's residence, Varsha, in two months. He had met the Shinde in the first week of August to discuss civic issues concerning the sprawl-ing BDD chawls in Mumbai and the development of colonies for police personnel. Shiv Sena chief Shin-de has been endeavouring to gain Thackeray's support in the runup to the State Assembly elections. Raj Thackeray on Sunday held a public meeting in the Worli area of central Mumbai *—PTI*

Chhattisgarh: 3 Naxals killed in encounter

NARAYANPUR, 23 SEPT

Three Naxalites, including a woman, were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattis-garh's Narayanpur district on Monday, a senior police official said. The gunfight broke out at around 4 pm in the forest of Abhujmaad on the Chhattisgarh-Maharashtra inter-border when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-naxal operation, he said. Security personnel recovered the bod-ies of three Naxalites, including a woman, with a cache of weapons including an AK-47 rifle, from the spot, he said. A search operation is still underway in the area, he added. With the latest encounter, the toll of Naxalites gunned down this year rose to 157. *—PTI*

Dry state Bihar saw 156 hooch deaths in 8 years

PATNA, 23 SEPT

More than 150 people have died in Bihar because of consuming illicit liquor in the state ever since it went dry in April 2016, a senior official of the Prohibition and Excise department said on Monday. However, 'suspected hooch deaths' reported from different parts of the state in the last eight years is 266, the official said. The sale and consumption of alcohol was banned in Bihar by the Nitish Kumar government in April 2016. "The state has witnessed a total of 156 'confirmed hooch deaths' from dif-ferent districts since 2016. Total number of 'suspected hooch deaths' reported in the state in the last eight years is 266, out of which 156 are confirmed," Prohibition and Excise department secretary Vinod Singh Gunjiyal told reporters at a press conference here. *—PTI*

Want locals to run J&K, Rahul wraps up campaign

Rahul says he will put pressure for restoring J&K statehood

Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi during an election rally ahead of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, at Zainakote area of Srinagar on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

SURANKOTE, 23 SEPT

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday said Congress wants Jammu and Kashmir to be run by locals rather than from Delhi, and promised the party would put pressure on the Centre to restore J-K's statehood after the ongoing assembly polls.

Addressing a rally in the Surankote Assembly segment of Poonch district, Gandhi also attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, claiming the INDIA bloc "broke his psychology" after the Lok Sabha elections. "He used to boast about a 56-inch chest but he is not the same person anymore".

The Lok Sabha MP accused the BJP and RSS of spreading "hatred and violence" in the country and divid-ing people on the lines of caste, creed, religion, region and language. He said there are numerous ex-amples of union territories being upgraded to states but never ever in the history of India a state was downgraded to a union territory.

Lashing out at the BJP-led government for "taking away" the rights of the people, he said earlier gov-ernments in J&K were run by locals and their decisions were meant for "your better future and in your interest".

He asked people to feel free to reach out to him to raise any issue in Parliament. "I am always available for you, just give me an order and I am there to help you." Hatred cannot be conquered by hatred but love, Gandhi said. *—PTI*

Abdullah, Lone ganged up to defeat AIP: Rashid

SRINAGAR, 23 SEPT

Lok Sabha MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid on Monday alleged that National Conference leader Omar Abdullah and People's Conference chief Sajad Gani Lone had ganged up in a bid to defeat his Awami Ittehad Party candidates.

The maverick politician, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, defeated both Abdullah and Lone in the Lok Sabha elections from Baramulla earlier this year. "Just a few days ago, Omar sahib was branding everyone, including Sajad Lone and Altaf Bukhari's Apni Party, as the BJP's B teams. I have irrefutable evidence that Omar Abdullah and Sajad Lone have ganged up to defeat Engineer Rashid in north Kash-mir and elsewhere. Can Omar Abdullah now tell us which is the BJP's B team?" Rashid told PTI *—PTI*

Sheikh Abdul Rashid *PHOTO: PTI*

A priest performs the purification ritual at Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple during YSRCP government, in Tirupati on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

4-hour cleansing ritual held at Tirumala temple

TIRUPATI, 23 SEPT

A four-hour Shanti Homam Panchagavya Prokshana (ritualistic sanitisation) to undo the alleged dese-crations that occurred during the YSRCP regime at Tirumala temple is underway now, temple sources said on Monday.

A Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) source confirmed to PTI that the ritual began at 6 am and will last till 10 am, aimed at propitiating Lord Venkateswara Swamy from the alleged sacrilegious practices such as mixing animal fats in making Tirupati laddus (consecrated sweet) and others. TTD executive officer J Shyamala Rao on Sunday said these rituals will ward off the ill effects and restore the sanctity of laddu prasadams (consecrated food) along with the well-being of Srivari devotees.

"We are forming a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising officers of IGP and above posts. The SIT will submit a report to the government and we will take action based on that report so that such things are not repeated," Naidu said.

Amid the ongoing controversy over Tirupati laddu, Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare on Monday said her department will consider additional measures to monitor ghee quality in the market only after receiving the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) report.

"We should all wait for the FSSAI to take action." Responding to queries about potential pre-festive season checks on ghee quality, Khare said, "We will take more action, if required, after the FSSAI report and provided there are con-sumer complaints on the National Consumer Helpline."

The secretary clarified that food-related complaints received on NCH are typically forwarded to FSSAI for action, given their expertise in the matter. *—PTI/ ANI*

Didn't shame deceased EY employee, says FM

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Facing flak for her comments on the death of a young CA employed with EY allegedly due to work pressure, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday clarified that she had not shamed the victim in any way and her comments were neither in-tended to do.

Her comments on Saturday that professionals should have inner strength to handle work pressures and this could be achieved through divinity, had drawn widespread criticism from social media as well as the Opposition parties.

Sitharaman on Monday issued a post on X to clarify on her statement. "With a sense of grief over the tragic loss, I

Nirmala Sitharaman *PHOTO: PTI*

highlighted the importance of institutions and families to support the children, and in no way victim shaming was done nor intended, even remotely," Sitharaman said.

Anna Sebastian Perayil, a 26-year-old chartered accountant working at EY Pune, died four months after joining firm allegedly due to stress. *—PTI*

Haryana only state to get 24 crops at MSP: Shah

CHANDIGARH, 23 SEPT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday slammed Congress on farmers' issue and said not a single state ruled by the grand old party is procuring 24 crops at minimum support price like Haryana does.

After addressing a poll rally in Tohana, Shah kept up the attack on Congress on various fronts at another rally in Yamunanagar district's Jagadhri.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Monday said his party will open the Shambhu border for farmers if it is voted to power in the Haryana assembly polls.

"I congratulate (Chief Minister) Nayab Saini... Haryana is the only state which procures 24 crops at MSP, Shah said.

"I want to ask (Cong leader Bhupinder) Hooda sahib, name any Congress-ruled state's chief minister who procures 24 crops at MSP," he said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah *PHOTO: PTI*

- Appealing people to bring back BJP to power in Haryana, Shah said, "On one hand is trusted BJP, on other is corrupt Congress. You have to decide between the two

Shah, who also holds the Cooperation department portfolio, then said, "the paddy MSP during Congress' time was Rs 1,310 (per quintal), the BJP government made it Rs 2,300 (per quintal) and after 8 (October), we are going to make it Rs 3100 (per quintal)".

"...They talk of farmers...but in 2013-2014 during the Congress-led UPA rule, the budget of only Rs 22,000 crore was kept aside for farmers. In 2024-25, the budget for farmers, under the Modi government, is Rs 1.52 lakh crore," he said in presence of Chief Minister Saini at the rally.

For 60 years, Congress party gave Rs 7 lakh crore loan whereas BJP government at the Centre, in 10 years, has given Rs 20 lakh crore, he said.

Appealing people to bring back the BJP to power in Haryana, Shah said, "On one hand is trusted BJP, on the other is corrupt Congress. You have to decide between the two."

Shah also took a dig over alleged infighting in the Congress' state unit.

The 90-member Haryana Assembly is scheduled to go to polls on October 5 and the counting of votes will be held on 8 October .*—PTI*

Prove charges against HP govt: Congress to Kangana

SHIMLA, 23 SEPT

The Himachal Pradesh Congress on Monday challenged Mandi MP Kangana Ranaut to prove her alle-ga-tion that the State government took loans and diverted the money to Sonia Gandhi, failing which it said it would file a defamation against her.

Himachal Pradesh minister Vikramaditya Singh told reporters that her comments showed the BJP MP's "intellectual bankruptcy".

"There cannot be a bigger foolish statement than saying that funds coming from the Centre or the State's funds for development are being given to Sonia Gandhi," he said.

Actor-politician Ranaut on Sunday claimed everyone was aware that Congress-ruled State govern-ments had hollowed out their coffers.

"If we (Centre) give disaster funds, it goes to the Chief Minister Relief Fund but everyone knows that it goes to the Sonia relief fund from there," she had said during a BJP programme in Manali. Singh also took a dig at the actor over her film "Emergency" still not being cleared for release by the Central Board of Film Certification.

She does not visit Himachal Pradesh often but, with her film being "blocked", maybe she is saddened and making baseless statements from her home, Singh said. *—PTI*

Shivraj's car gets stuck in pothole in Jharkhand

BAHARAGORA, 23 SEPT

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's car got stuck in a pothole amid heavy rain in Jhar-khand's East Singhbhum district on Monday, police said. The incident happened when Chouhan was returning to the helipad after addressing the BJP's 'Parivartan' rally in Baharagora, they said. The car got stuck as the driver could not gauge the potholes in the water-logged road amid heavy rain, police said. After his car got stuck, Chouhan got down with an umbrella and spoke to locals. He safely went to the helipad and returned to Ranchi on a helicopter. *—PTI*

MODERN RAMAYANA

Refusing to sit on the chair used by former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, Atishi chose to sit on a different chair as CM. She said the chair belongs to Kejriwal after taking charge at the Delhi Secretariat. She said she will run Delhi government for next four months just as Bharat ruled Ayodhya by keeping Lord Ram's 'khadaun' (wooden slippers) on throne for 14 years *PHOTO: PTI*

ADVICE TO FIRMS

Modi urges global tech CEOs to be part of India growth story

NEW YORK, 23 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged CEOs of US majors to take advantage of India's growth story as the country is making all efforts to become the third largest economy of the world in his third term.

India is currently the fifth largest economy of the world after the US, China, Germany and Japan with a GDP of around USD 3.9 trillion. India has been the fastest growing large economies of the world with GDP growth rate of over 7 per cent for last three years.

Companies should take advantage of India's growth story for collaboration and innovation by co-developing, co-designing, and co-producing in India for the world, harnessing the opportunities from the country's economic and technological growth, he said.

Narendra Modi *PHOTO: PTI*

Assuring the business leaders of India's deep commitment to the protection of intellectual property and to fostering tech innovation, Modi highlighted the economic transformation happening in the country, particularly in electronics and information technology manufacturing and semiconductors.

The meeting took place at the Lotte New York Palace Hotel on Sunday during the second leg of Modi's three-day US visit. It saw the participation of CEOs of 15 major US-based firms working on cutting-edge technologies such as AI, quantum computing and semiconductors.

Organised by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) School of Engineering, the CEOs of top US tech firms, including Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayena and NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang attended the meeting. *—PTI*

"I have enjoyed so many meetings with the Prime Minister. He's such an incredible student, and every time I see him, he wants to learn about technology, artificial intelligence, the potential and opportunity for India, the impact on India, society and industry

— Jensen Huang, GPUmajor Nvidia CEO

The Prime Minister has been focused on transforming India with his Digital India vision. He pushed us to continue making in India, design in India. We are proud to now make our Pixel phones manufactured in India

—Sundar Pichai, Google CEO

Mann's Punjab govt inducts 5 MLAs as Cabinet ministers

CHANDIGARH, 23 SEPT

The Bhagwant Mann-led Punjab government on Monday inducted five MLAs as ministers as it carried out a Cabinet rejig.

Those sworn in included Hardeep Singh Mundian, Barinder Kumar Goyal, Tarunpreet Singh Sond, Ravjot Singh and Mohinder Bhagat.

Among the new inductees, three are from the Malwa region and two from the Doaba region. Among the new ministers are two Dalits.

Mundian was allocated the important portfolios of revenue, rehabilitation and disaster management, water supply and sani-tation, and housing and urban development.

Goyal was given mines and geology, water resources, and conservation of land and water, while Sond got tourism and culture affairs, investment promotion, labour, hospitality, industry and commerce, and rural development and panchayats.

Bhagwant Mann *PHOTO: PTI*

Ravjot Singh was given the portfolios of local government and parliamentary affairs while Bhagat was given defence services welfare, freedom fighters, horticulture.

The jail has been given to Laljit Singh Bhullar and Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains has been given public relations. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ch'garh man dies of snakebite, locals burn reptile alive

KORBA, 23 SEPT

A 22-year-old man died after a venomous snake bit him in Chhattisgarh's Korba district, following which locals burnt the reptile alive on his funeral pyre. After the incident on Sunday, some locals said they feared the snake might harm someone else also, hence they burnt it on the pyre. A district official said there was a need to educate people about these reptiles and snakebite management. A common krait bit the man, identified as Digeshwar Rathiya, on Saturday night when he was arranging his bed. Following the incident, the villagers managed to catch the snake and kept it inside a covered basket. They burnt the snake alive. —PTI

Lanka arrests 37 fishermen; TN CM writes to EAM

CHENNAI, 23 SEPT

Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday apprised External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar of the arrest of 37 Tamil Nadu fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy and seizure of three boats, and sought measures for their release. Writing to Jaishankar, Stalin said the fishermen were arrested on 21 September, 2024 and as he has been pointing out, such instances of arrests of TN fishermen, "while fishing in their traditional fishing waters have been on the rise. " Besides this, the Sri Lankan courts are levying penalties that are beyond the means of these fishermen. Strong measures must be taken to prevent the Sri Lankan authorities from apprehending fishermen and their fishing boats, the CM requested. —PTI

Brazilian woman hides 124 cocaine capsules, arrested

Mumbai, 23 Sept

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has arrested a Brazilian woman after recovering 124 cocaine-filled capsules which she swallowed before landing at the Mumbai international airport, an official said. The value of the seized contraband, which was being brought for smuggling in India, is estimated to be Rs 9.73 crore, the official said, adding that a probe was on to trace other members of the international drug syndicate. The woman was intercepted on a specific input after she landed from Sao Paulo on Wednesday, a DRI Mumbai zonal unit official said on Sunday. The passenger admitted to having ingested capsules containing drugs and carrying them in her body for smuggling into India, the official said. She was produced before a magistrate and admitted to the state-run JJ Hospital here. The passenger has been arrested and further investigation is underway to trace other members of the international drug syndicate, the official added. —PTI

Mpox patient discharged from Delhi hosp: Officials

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

An Mpox patient admitted to the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital earlier this month has been discharged, the hospital officials confirmed. The 26-year-old patient, who had been admitted to the disaster ward dedicated to Mpox cases for almost 12 days, was discharged on Saturday. An official from the hospital confirmed "the only Mpox patient was discharged on 21 September." The 26-year-old patient from Hisar, Haryana, was admitted to the hospital on 8 September, with doctors confirming the diagnosis on 9 September. The World Health Organisation (WHO) last month declared Mpox a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)' for the second time in view of its prevalence and spread across many parts of Africa. —PTI

Armstrong murder accused shot dead in TN

This is 3rd encounter in BSP chief's murder; Seizing Raja had 39 cases pending against him

CHENNAI, 23 SEPT

A notorious gangster, accused of murdering BSP leader K Armstrong in Chennai, was killed in an alleged police encounter on Monday morning. Raja, aka Seizing Raja, was taken into custody by the Chennai Police on Sunday evening from his hideout in Andhra Pradesh. He was killed in Chennai on Monday morning.

When the accused was taken to a location on the outskirts of the city to recover weapons hidden by him, he tried to escape and shot at the police team.

A police officer fired at him in self-defence and he succumbed to his injuries, a senior official said.

Many years ago, while working for a loan recovery agent, N Raja, 51 used to 'seize' vehicles of defaulters and hence, he came to be known as 'seizing' Raja and later became infamous for his 'involvement' in criminal offences, police sources said.

Raja, having sustained injuries, fainted, and he was rushed to a hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, the police official told reporters here.

Raja, who has a total of 39 serious criminal cases against him, including six for murder, has been jailed eight times under the Goondas Act. A history sheeter, there are more than 10 warrants pending against him and he is a proclaimed offender.

Special police teams were formed to nab him and based on a tip-off, they arrested him on 22 September from his hideout at Kadapa in Andhra Pradesh.

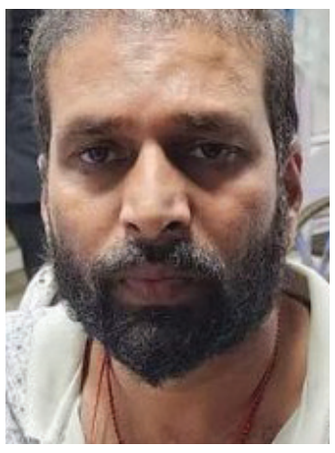
The body of the accused has been sent to Government Royapettah Hospital for autopsy.

Congress MP Karti P Chidambaram, in a post on X said: "Encounter killings is a reflection of bad & inefficient policing. This is vigilante justice & has no place in a rule of law system."

Starting from July this year, this is the third encounter death in Chennai. On 5 July, BSP state chief K Armstrong was hacked to death. Thiruvengadam, a key accused in the Armstrong murder case and a history sheeter 'Kakkathoppu' Balaji died in police encounters.

On 8 July, senior IPS officer A Arun took over as Chennai police commissioner. Tamil Nadu's principal Opposition AIADMK had for long targeted the ruling DMK over its handling of the law and order situation.

—PTI



A police officer fired at BSP Chief's murder accused, 'Seizing' Raja in self-defence and he succumbed to his injuries, on Monday PHOTO: SALAR

- Starting from July this year, this is the third encounter death in Chennai after A Arun took charge as Chennai Police Commissioner

THE ACCUSED

- Total cases against Raja are 39, including 5 murder cases. Detained 5 times under Goonda Act

ENCOUNTERS IN CHENNAI

- 1st encounter: On 14 July, K Thiruvengadam, a suspect in BSP leader's murder was killed
- 2nd encounter: on 18 September, Kakka Thoppu' Balaji, a wanted criminal in 50+ cases was shot
- Seizing Raja was 3rd encounter since A Arun assumed as Chennai Police Commissioner

Police at the site of encounter after killing of Anuj Pratap Singh, who robbed Sultanpur's Bharti Jewelers, at Achalganj, Unnao PHOTO: PTI

UP STF GUNS DOWN SECOND ACCUSED IN SULTANPUR ROBBERY CASE

LUCKNOW/UNNAO, 23 SEPT

The Uttar Pradesh Police on Monday said it has gunned down a second accused in the Sultanpur jewellery store robbery case in a pre-dawn encounter in Unnao district.

The gunfight between the accused, Anuj Pratap Singh, and the Lucknow unit of the Special Task Force (STF) broke out around 4 am on Monday in the Achalganj area, officials said.

On 28 August, jewellery worth approximately Rs 1.5 crore was stolen from a store in the Thatheri market area of Sultanpur city.

The STF had gunned down Mangesh Yadav, another accused in the case, on September 5. The killing sparked a political controversy with the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Congress calling the encounter "fake".

SP chief and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav had alleged that the action was based on the "caste" of the accused while the state police denied all such claims.

"Two pistols, seven empty cartridges, three live cartridges and a bag containing silver jewellery were recovered from his possession. A motorcycle was also impounded from the encounter site," Bhuker said.

—PTI

WAITING FOR 16TH COLLAPSE

Restoration work underway after a portion of the under-construction Bakhtiyarpur-Tajpur bridge collapsed, in Bihar PHOTO: PTI

Yet again, an under construction bridge collapses in Bihar

PATNA, 23 SEPT

A portion of an under-construction bridge collapsed in Bihar's Patna district, an official said on Monday. This is 15th such incident in the state this year. No one was injured in the incident that occurred on Sunday night, he said.

The incident comes in the backdrop of more than a dozen bridges and causeways collapsed in several Bihar districts in the recent past.

The construction of the Bakhtiyarpur-Tajpur Ganga Mahasetu' has been supervised by the Bihar State Road Development Corporation Ltd.

"The incident took place during the replacement of bearings of girders of the Bakhtiyarpur-Tajpur Ganga Mahasetu. While placing the girders on the pillars, one of them collapsed.

"Replacing the bearings is a routine exercise. There are no reports of casualty. We are going to the spot to inspect the ongoing work," BSRDCL Chief General Manager Prabin Chandra Gupta told PTI.

Sources said the construction of the project has been going on for last several years.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar laid the foundation stone for the construction of the 5.57-kilometre-long Bakhtiyarpur-Tajpur Ganga Mahasetu in June 2011. The total cost of the project was estimated at Rs 1,602.74 crore.

Commenting on the incident, opposition RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said in a post on X: "The incident proves that the very foundation of the NDA government is based on commission, bribery, institutional corruption, financial irregularities, illegal extortion and organized loot by criminals and officials."

He wondered if Prime Minister would inform people whether the continuous collapse of bridges in the state is a coincidence or something else. —PTI

DU student thrashed, turban forcibly removed in scuffle

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

A Sikh student was thrashed and his turban forcibly removed by some students during a clash with another group at a college here, triggering criticism as the video went viral on social media.

The incident occurred at Sri Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College under Delhi University on Saturday, days ahead of the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections scheduled for 27 September.

PHOTO: PTI

The purported video of the incident shows a red-turbaned student being dragged, kicked and assaulted until his turban fell to the ground. An FIR has been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at Maurice Nagar police station in the matter, police said. According to police, Pavit Singh Gujral, a second-year student said that he was attacked during nomination process for elections.

"They forcibly removed my turban, beat me and pulled my kesh (hair). I was attacked by the group and I am not feeling safe in the college. I feel that my life is at risk," Singh said in the FIR. —PTI

PHOTO: PTI

HC gives sarcastic reply to WB Durga puja panel

KOLKATA, 23 SEPT

In a sarcastic remark, the Calcutta High Court on Monday said the West Bengal government may consider giving Rs 10 lakh as dole to each Durga Puja committee, maintaining that the current Rs 85,000 appears to be meagre.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee recently announced that the dole for Durga Puja organisers, which was Rs 75,000 in 2023, would be raised to Rs 85,000 this year.

Hearing a petition seeking a stop to the disbursal of dole to Durga Puja organisers by the state, the court directed the state government to file an affidavit on the petitioner's prayer for an audited report of the CAG on disbursal of funds to clubs and NGOs and utilisation of the money by these organisations.

Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam told Advocate General Kishore Dutta, representing the West Bengal government, that the state should consider giving Rs 10 lakh to each organiser as that would be commensurate to conducting the puja.

Chief Justice said that he visited several Durga Puja pandals in the two previous years and felt that Rs 85,000 is nothing compared to the expenditure made in organising it, and those are probably utilised for the expenses of the organisers.

—PTI

SC to hear pleas against laws granting immunity to husbands in marital rape

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Supreme Court has said it listed for Tuesday pleas on the vexed legal question of whether a husband should enjoy immunity from prosecution for the offence of rape if he forces his wife, who is not a minor, to have sex.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala said the pleas were already "listed tomorrow" and they would be taken up after some part-heard cases.

The pleas for early listing were mentioned by senior advocate Karuna Nundy, appearing for a litigant in the case.

Under the exception clause of Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), now repealed and replaced by the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his wife, the wife not being minor, is not rape.

Even under the new law,

PHOTO: PTI

Exception 2 to Section 63 (rape) says that "sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under eighteen years of age, is not rape".

The top court on January 16, 2023, sought the Centre's response on a clutch of petitions assailing the IPC provision, which provides protection to a husband against prosecution for forcible sexual intercourse if the wife is an adult. Another plea has been filed by a man against a Karnataka High Court verdict that paved the way for his prosecution for allegedly raping his wife. —PTI

State a 'single litigant' for court, says SC

State is a 'single litigant" for courts and it should come with a unified stand after taking on board all the departments concerned, Supreme Court said. The observation by a bench headed by Justice BR Gavai came while noting that there was some disputes between forest and revenue departments of Mizoram government in a matter pertaining to 1965 case. —PTI

SMASHING PATRIARCHY

'Laapataa Ladies' makes grand entry into Oscars

CHENNAI, 23 SEPT

Kiran Rao's 'Laapataa Ladies' has been picked as India's official entry for Oscars 2025, the Film Federation of India announced on Monday.

The Hindi film, a light-hearted satire on patriarchy, was chosen from a list of 29 films, including Bollywood hit 'Animal', Malayalam National Award winner 'Aattam' and Cannes winner 'All We Imagine As Light'.

The 13-member select committee headed by Assamese director Jahnu Barua 'unanimously' decided on 'Laapataa Ladies', produced by Aamir Khan and Rao, for reckoning in the best international film category at the Academy Awards.

Besides 'Laapataa Ladies', Hindi film 'Srikanth', Tamil movies 'Vaazhai' and 'Thangalaan' and Malayalam film 'Ullozhukku' were among the top five in the 29-title list.

'Laapataa Ladies', which was released in March to universal praise from the critics, is a heartwarming and empowering take on two brides in rural India in 2001 who accidently get swapped during a train journey. The film is backed by Rao's Kindling Productions, Aamir Khan Productions, and Jio Studios.

Rao said she is 'deeply honored and delighted' that her film will represent India at the 97th Academy Awards.

The filmmaker, who returned to direct 'Laapataa Ladies' after a hiatus of almost 13 years, said she and her team look forward to taking the journey ahead 'with great enthusiasm'. Rao made her debut with 'Dhobi Ghat', the 2010 drama centered around people from different walks of life in Mumbai.

Starring Nitanshi Goel, Pratibha Ranta and Sparsh Shrivastav in the lead alongside Ravi Kishan, Chhaya Kadam and Geeta Aggarwal Sharma, the Hindi film had its world premiere at the 2023 Toronto International Film Festival.

Tamil film 'Maharaja', Telugu titles 'Kalki 2898 AD' and 'Hanu-Man', as well as the Hindi films 'Swatantraya Veer Savarkar' and 'Article 370' were also part of the list.

No Indian entry has been nominated for best international feature film at the Oscars since the Khan-starrer 'Lagaan' in 2002. —PTI

Laapataa Ladies by Kiran Rao was released in March PHOTO: Instagram

- The 13-member select committee headed by Assamese director Jahnu Barua 'unanimously' decided on Laapataa Ladies

Iron rods found on rail tracks in Punjab's Bathinda

CHANDIGARH, 23 SEPT

Nine iron rods were found on the tracks in Punjab's Bathinda district, disrupting railway traffic for a brief period, officials said on Monday.

The rods were found on Sunday near Bangi Nagar on the Delhi-Bathinda route.

A Government Railway Police (GRP) official said a goods train loco pilot spotted the rods.

"We recovered nine iron rods from the spot," said the official.

The loco pilot of the goods train travelling from Bathinda to BWL Kori spotted the rods, which were removed by the pointsman and the assistant station master. The train was held up for 40 minutes, a railway official said.

Later, Railway Protection Force (RPF) and GRP officials visited the spot and searched the area. CCTV cameras in and around the location are being scouted for clues. —PTI

Rly staff held for stealing, detonators: MP

Khandwa, 23 Sept

A railway staffer has been taken into custody for stealing 10 "harmless" detonators that went off on a track during the passing of a military special train in Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Monday. Ten detonators, termed "harmless" by the Railways, went off on a track near Sagphata between Nepanagar and Khandwa stations on 18 September.

—PTI

IN 1 HOUR, 5L TREES PLANTED

The 128th Infantry Battalion of the Territorial Army, along with various organisations including the district administration, the army, Border Security Force, Air Force, panchayat, forest department, and municipal council, successfully planted an astonishing 5,19,000 saplings in one hour in Jaisalmer and secured a place in the World Book of Records
PHOTO: PTI

JVP gets its biggest high with Anura's rise in SL

Marxist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake rose from a humble background to the pinnacle of leadership in Sri Lanka, presenting himself as a transformative leader to young voters and those tired of the "corrupt politics" of the traditional politicians.

Popularly known as AKD, 56-year-old Dissanayake was sworn in as Sri Lanka's ninth president on Monday by Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya at the Presidential Secretariat.

His accession to the post is a remarkable turnaround for his half-century-old party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which had long remained on the margins. He is Sri Lanka's first-ever Marxist party leader to become head of state.

The leader of the JVP's broader front, the National People's Power (NPP), Dissanayake's anti-corruption message and his promise of a change in political culture resonated strongly with young voters who have been demanding system change since the economic crisis.

The NPP's popularity has risen sharply since 2022 after securing only around three per cent of the vote in the last presidential election in 2019.

In his inaugural address to the nation after after taking the oath as President, Dissanayake said he will do his best to preserve democracy and work towards restoring the honour of politicians as people have misgivings about their conduct.

Earlier in an interview with Daily Mail online in August, he had said, "In our country, only an un-corrupt force will take action against the corrupt. The slogan of punishing the corrupt has been echoed on stage since 1994 under Chandrika (Kumaratunga), Mahinda (Rajapaksa), Maithripala (Sirisena) and Gotabaya (Rajapaksa). The corrupt will never punish the corrupt. The corrupt always protect the corrupt. It is the NPP's priority to end corruption."

Marxist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake takes oath as Sri Lanka's new President during a ceremony, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Monday
PHOTO: PTI

Dissanayake, during another event in March, passionately asserted that the political struggle is not merely about a change of government but an endeavour to usher in political, economic, and social transformations of paramount importance in Sri Lanka's history.

The NPP leader who hails from rural Thambuttegama in the North Central province is a science graduate from the Colombo suburban Kelaniya University.

He joined the JVP, the mother party of the NPP, in 1987 at the height of their anti-Indian rebellion.

The JVP eliminated many activists of all democratic parties that supported the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987. The Rajiv Gandhi-J R Jayawardena pact was the direct Indian intervention to solve the Tamil demand for political autonomy in the country.

The JVP dubbed the Indian intervention as a betrayal of Sri Lanka's sovereignty.

However, Dissanayake's visit to India in February this year is seen as a change in the NPP leadership's approach towards India, expressing alignment with foreign investment interests.

With JVP's taking up democratic politics in the late 90s, Dissanayake got a place in the JVP central committee.

In the 2000 parliamentary election, he entered Parliament from the JVP. He has been an opposition livewire since 2001.

Dissanayake re-entered Parliament from the north-western district of Kurunegala after the 2004 election in an alliance with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. He was appointed the minister of agriculture.

With the JVP leaving the government over a joint mechanism with the LLTE on sharing the 2004 Tsunami relief aid to the North, then controlled by the rebel group, Dissanayake became the parliamentary group leader of the JVP in 2008.

He was again elected to Parliament in the 2010 parliamentary election from the Colombo district and became his party's chief in 2014.

Having won again from Colombo in 2015, he became the chief opposition whip, a post he held till 2019.

In 2019, the JVP rebranded itself as the NPP, which embraced sections of Sri Lankan society that had never been enamoured towards the JVP given its violent past.

The party had led two bloody rebellions in 1971 and between 1987 and 1990 to overthrow popular governments and faced brutal state crackdowns each time.

Dissanayake faces the immediate challenge of determining the future of economic reforms in the cash-strapped country.

Historically, the NPP has opposed International Monetary Fund programmes, but its recent endorsement of the current programme, although with a renegotiation of its terms, marks a significant shift. *—PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڈا

Study: Screen time linked to outbursts of anger in kids

The number of children who own their own tablet has increased from seven per cent in 2013 to 44 per cent in 2020. In the United States, tablet use has become nearly universal, with 93 per cent of parents reporting that their two- to four-year-old uses a mobile device.

Tablets and mobile devices can be connected to the internet and allow users unlimited access to tailored content thanks to personalized algorithms. For this reason, these devices can be highly engaging for young children. However, they offer few opportunities for children to develop important emotion regulation skills, including the ability to manage strong emotions like anger and frustration.

The early childhood years are foundational for the development of emotion regulation skills. More challenging, less well-regulated children also tend to be exposed to more screen time by parents.

Tablet use and emotional regulation

Over the course of three years, we longitudinally studied a sample of 315 children at the ages of 3.5, 4.5 and 5.5 years in Nova Scotia. Parents reported how much time their child spent using tablets on average every day, and reported how frequently their child expressed anger and frustration in the context of their daily routines.

Children in our sample spend on average 55 minutes (0.92 hours) per day using tablets at age 3.5, 57 minutes (0.95 hours) per day using tablets at 4.5, and 60 (one hour) per day using tablets at age 5.5.

We found that for every 73 minutes (1.22 hours) increase in tablet use at the age of 3.5 years, there was a significant increase in expressions of anger and frustration more frequently at age 4.5. Children who expressed anger and frustration more frequently at age 4.5 then increased their tablet time at age 5.5 by 17 minutes (0.28 hours).

Our study's rigorous design also allowed us to compare each child to themselves over time. That means they served as their own baseline control, which prevents other factors such as pre-existing individual differences (such as child sex and temperament) or differences in the quality of the family environment or socio-economic status from confounding the analyses.

Because of their small size, tablets can be transported to restaurants or brought along for car or bus rides to keep children busy or manage boredom and emotional outbursts. Indeed, parents report using screen media as a calming tool to help manage young children's emotional outbursts. This strategy may be an effective short-term solution, but is likely to backfire in the long run.

In addition, very young children can operate tablets on their own, which can lead parents to use mobile devices to keep children busy. As such, child tablet use is likely to offer immediate gratification to children while remaining a solitary activity.

For these reasons, three-year-olds who spend more hours using tablets may forfeit opportunities to engage in activities — such as interactions with caregivers or free play with other children — that are essential for rehearsing and eventually mastering self-regulation. By the age of four, more frequent expression of anger also contributed to increases in tablet use, suggesting that early childhood tablet use could contribute to a vicious cycle over time.

Our study is not without limitations. First, our study was conducted during the pandemic with a convenience sample of 315 children with low levels of socioeconomic risk. Replications on more diverse and vulnerable samples post-pandemic are needed to confirm these results.

Future studies could examine the roles of screen media content and context of use on children. For instance, using tablets for e-book reading versus using a tablet to watch videos on YouTube may have different effects on children. Furthermore, the co-use of tablets with caregivers may offer more opportunities for social interactions, which may contribute to child learning outcomes.

Takeaways for parents and caregivers

Our results indicate that parents should closely monitor tablet use in the early preschool years. Parents should also avoid using tablets as a digital calming tool, especially with children who may be having trouble regulating their emotions and behaviour.

Finally, to improve emotional regulation skills, parents can ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to engage in activities that promote the development of emotion. *—PTI*

For every 73 minutes increase in tablet use at the age of 3.5 years, there was a significant increase in expressions of anger and frustration at age 4.5
PHOTO: FREEPIK

The Anand effect that is shaping a 'golden generation'

If you had to roll the dice, these are pretty good teams to roll them with. Viswanathan Anand had a strong hunch that India would go on to be more than within "smelling" distance of gold at the Chess Olympiad this time.

And much to the delight of the revered Grandmaster, who played a key role in shaping some of the brightest youngsters in Indian chess right now, the country swept both the men's and women's gold at the 45th Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary.

World Championship challenger D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi, and P Harikrishna decimated competition to clinch the gold in the open section, finishing ahead of top seeds USA and Uzbekistan.

Then Harika Dronavalli, R Vaishali, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal, and Tania Sachdev claimed the top honours in the women's event ahead of Kazakhstan and USA to complete an Indian sweep.

It was a first for the country and it was fitting that Anand, its original superstar of the game, had a role.

Both the teams had fetched bronze medals in the previous Olympiad, which was held on home turf in Chennai. Anand knew they "were smelling the gold" at that time but let it slip in the closing stages.

However, the 54-year-old five-time world champion, in an interview to PTI before the Olympiad, put his faith in both the teams' ability to go the distance in Budapest and it was icing on the cake that he was there to witness history being made by them in the Hungarian capital.

"...you know, if I had to roll the dice, these are good teams to roll them with," he had said.

Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa, Erigaisi and Vaishali have trained at the Westbridge Anand Chess Academy (WACA) that the bespectacled chess wizard set up four years ago in Chennai.

The 18-year-old Gukesh and the 19-year-old Praggnanandhaa have often stated that they would not be where they are without "Vishy sir".

So, it was hardly a surprise that the International Chess Federation (FIDE) addressed him as the "father of Indian chess boom". This was after the great Garry Kasparov paid tribute to his genius by saying that the "children of Vishy Anand are on the loose!" after Gukesh won the Candidates in April to become the youngest world title challenger.

Former World Chess Champion Grand Master Viswanathan Anand
PHOTO: PTI

Anand prefers to share the credit with the parents and formative coaches of the players but does say that his idea of a chess academy, which was inspired by schools he had seen in the Soviet Union more than three decades ago, did play its part.

"The aim was very simply, to help. Indians were consistently getting to the top 200, but not quite in breaking into the top 100 in the same way. So the idea was, you know, can we support the most talented youngsters and see if we can just help them get past that stretch? I think we have been successful now," he had said before the Olympiad.

- World Championship challenger D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi, and P Harikrishna decimated competition to clinch the gold in the open section, finishing ahead of top seeds USA and Uzbekistan

"I mean, obviously, there are lots and lots of people involved. Not only, you know, WACA, but also their parents, their own coaches, we try to integrate and make sure that we can fit in nicely. But I think, you know, we definitely played our part."

In his interaction with FIDE during the Olympiad, Anand did admit to being surprised at the pace with which the likes of Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa have risen.

"I took all the youngsters who had become Grandmaster before the age of 14. To be honest, the idea was to support them from being top juniors to becoming world beaters," he said.

"My initial group was Praggnanandhaa, Gukesh, Arjun joined a bit later. In the girls, Vaishali was there. Did I expect it to go this fast? Not really. Did I suspect this could happen? Yes. But somehow this is unbelievable," he added.

"This is not a coincidence but at the same time, exceeds my expectations."

The affable, semi-retired player, who still manages to win tournaments for fun, the last being the Leon Masters in Spain a couple of months back is quite content with what he has managed to achieve as a mentor given the challenges that WACA faced before taking off.

The Covid-19 pandemic was at its peak when the academy was founded in 2020.

Anand knew he had a bunch of very special kids putting their faith in him to steer them and he is glad to have been there.

"It feels like a magical time for India. As I said, with such players, you know that you'll have a certain amount of results, but they consistently exceeded (expectations). It's very nice to have it all at the same time," he said grinning widely. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AP

Pak Taliban deny attacking convoy of foreign envoys

ISLAMABAD, 23 SEPT

The Pakistani Taliban on Monday denied involvement in a bombing attack on a police convoy that was escorting foreign ambassadors in the country's restive northwest, as authorities said they were still trying to determine who was behind the attack, which killed a police officer. The ambassadors and sen-ior envoys were traveling on Sunday to the Swat Valley, a former stronghold of the Pakistani Taliban, when the attack occurred in Malam Jabba, one of Pakistan's two ski resorts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan. No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but Mohammad Khuras-ani, a spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban, known as TTP,denied detonating the improvised explosive device that hit a police vehicle accompanying the convoy. *—AP*

Pope cancels his audiences due to illness ahead of trip

ROME, 23 SEPT

Pope Francis cancelled his audiences Monday because of a "slight flu-like state" just days before he is to embark on a trip to Belgium and Luxembourg, the Vatican said. The move was described as a "pre-caution" in the statement from the Vatican. Francis is due to visit Luxembourg on Thursday and then spend the rest of the week in Belgium, ending with a Mass in Brussels on Sunday. Francis, 87, who has battled a series of health problems in recent years, has had a packed schedule of audi-ences since re-turning from a four-nation, 11-day journey through Asia on 13 September. It was the lon-gest and far-thest trip of his pontificate. The statement from the Holy See press office described Francis as having a "flu-like state". *—AP*

Britain's Treasury Chief to turn on economic optimism

LIVERPOOL, 23 SEPT

British Treasury chief Rachel Reeves will pledge Monday not to return to an era of public spending cuts despite the dire state of the UK's national finances. Reeves plans to stress optimism in a speech to the Labour Party's annual conference, aiming to reassure party members, jit-tery despite a recent land-slide election victory, that her first budget next month won't be all doom and gloom. The party said Reeves, the UK's first female finance minister, will stress that "my optimism for Britain burns as bright as it ever has done." The centre-left party is gathering in the northwest England port city of Liverpool three months after winning power in Britain's 4 July election. *—AP*

Man reunites with family after seven decades in Oakland

OAKLAND, 23 SEPT

On 21 February, 1951, a woman lured Luis Armando Albino — then only 6 years old — from the West Oakland park where he had been playing with his older brother and promised the Puerto Rico-born boy in Spanish that she would buy him candy. Instead, the woman abducted the boy, flying him to the East Coast where he ended up with a couple who raised him as if he were their own son. For more than seven decades he remained missing but was always in the hearts and thoughts of his family. His mother died in 2005 but never gave up hope that he was alive. That hope was ful-filled earlier this year: Thanks largely to the persistence of a niece Alida Alequin in Oakland who used DNA test-ing and newspaper clippings in her search — and the efforts of police, the FBI the kidnapped child, now a father and grandfather, was found alive and living on the East Coast. *—Mercury News*

SL's new Prez pledges to do all to clean up public life

Dissanayake pledged to change 'corrupt' culture

Anura Kumara Dissanayake signs documents after taking oath as Sri Lanka's new President, in Sri Lanka on Monday PHOTO: PTI

COLOMBO, 23 SEPT

Sri Lanka's new President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Monday vowed to preserve democracy and do everything to clean public life.

The remarks by Dissanayake, 56, came as he was sworn in as Sri Lanka's ninth president on Monday by Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya at the Presidential Secretariat.

In his inaugural address to the nation, Dissanayake thanked his predecessor Ranil Wickremesinghe for respecting the people's mandate and facilitating a peaceful transfer of power.

"I assure you that I will do my best to preserve democracy and work towards restoring the honour of politicians as people have misgivings about their conduct," Dissanayake said in an address after taking the oath. Dissanayake stressed Sri Lanka cannot remain in isolation and needed international cooperation. He said he is not a magician, but his objective is to be part of a collective responsibility to elevate the eco-nomic crisis-stricken country. Dissanayake, the leader of the Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna party's broader front National Peo-ple's Power (NPP), defeated his closest rival Sajith Premadasa of Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) in Sat-urday's election.

—PTI

>>>More on Page 5

Sri Lankan PM Gunawardena resigns

COLOMBO, 23 SEPT

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena resigned from his post on Monday as part of a power transition in the country following the presidential elec-tion won by Anura Kumara Dissanayake. The resignation came ahead of the swear-ing-in ceremony of Dissanayake. Gunawardena, 75, was prime minister since July 2022. He said he is resigning from the post as a new President has been elected and that he would create the envi-ronment to ap-point a new Cabinet. *—PTI*

Hezbollah enters 'new phase' of battle: Minister

Hezbollah members carry the coffins of two of their comrades who were killed on Wednesday attack in Beirut PHOTO: PTI

BEIRUT, 23 SEPT

Hezbollah's deputy chief, Naim Kassem, said on Sunday the group was in a "new phase" of its battle against Israel.

"We have entered a new phase, namely an open reck-oning" he said, adding that only a ceasefire in Gaza would put a stop to cross-border attacks, warning "the Israeli military solution increases the di-lemma for Israel and the residents of the north" of the country.

Kassem personally attend-ed the funeral of military leaders Ibrahim Aqil and Mahmoud Hamad on Sun-day in southern Beirut. They were killed in the Israeli raid last Friday during a leader-ship meeting of the party's elite Radwan Brigade.

Kassem's latest remarks are seen as Hezbollah's response to Israeli pressure to force the party to stop hos-tilities in southern Lebanon that have raged for almost a year, in order to allow civil-ians to return to their homes.

Israel's air force launches dozens of airstrikes on south-ern Lebanon Israel's air force carried out dozens of air-strikes on southern Lebanon, state media and the Israeli military said. Residents of different villages in southern Lebanon posted photos on social media that they said showed their towns being struck. *—Arab News/ PTI*

Israel orders Lebanese to leave their homes

JERUSALEM, 23 SEPT

The Israeli military on Monday called on people in southern Lebanon to imme-diately evacuate homes and other buildings where Hezbollah stores weapons and said it was carrying out "extensive strikes" against the militant group.

It was the first warning of its kind in nearly a year of low-level conflict along the border and came after a particularly heavy exchange of fire on Sunday. Hezbollah launched over 100 rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel in retaliation for recent strikes that killed a top commander and dozens of its fighters.

Hezbollah has vowed to continue its strikes in soli-darity with the Palestinians and Hamas, a fellow Iran-backed militant group. *—AP*

Iran MP says ex-president Raisi used pager

A senior Iranian official reportedly says Tehran was involved in purchasing the pagers held by Hezbollah operatives that exploded across Lebanon last week in an attack widely blamed on Israel, and hinted that such a device could have been responsible for the helicopter crash that killed Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi in May. A journalist said that Hezbollah had been hacked and confirmed that Raisi had one of the compromised pagers. *—Times of Israel*

Zelenskyy visits US ammunition factory

SCRANTON, 23 SEPT

Under extraordinarily tight security, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday visited the Pennsylvania ammunition factory that is producing one of the most critically needed munitions for his country's fight to fend off Russian ground forces.

His visit to the Scranton Army Ammunition Plant kicked off a busy week in the United States to shore up sup-port for Ukraine in the war. He will speak at the UN General Assembly annual gathering in New York on Tuesday and Wednesday and then travel to Washington for talks on Thursday with President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, listens while visiting the Scranton Army Ammunition Plant in Scranton, Pa on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

As Zelenskyy's large motor-cade made its way to the ammunition plant on Sunday afternoon, a small contingent of supporters waving Ukrainian flags assembled nearby to show their apprecia-tion for his visit to thank the workers. The Scranton plant is one of the few facilities in the country to manufacture 155 mm artillery shells and has increased production over the past year. "It's unfortu-nate that we need a plant like this, but it's here, and it's here to protect the world," said Vera Kowal Krewson, a first-generation Ukrainian American who was among those who greeted Zelen-skyy's motorcade. "And I strongly feel that way."

The 155 mm shells are used in howitzer systems, which are towed large guns with long bar-rels that can fire at various angles. Howitzers can strike targets up to 24 kilometres to 32 kilometres away and are high-ly valued by ground forces to take out enemy targets from a protected distance. *—AP*

Russia wants to illegally control Sea of Azov: Ukraine

THE HAGUE, 23 SEPT

Ukraine on Monday accused Russia of seeking to illegally seize control of the strategical-ly important Sea of Azov and Kerch Strait, as hearings opened in a high-stakes arbitration case between Kyiv and Moscow.

The hearings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration are the lat-est in a string of inter-national legal cases involving Russia and Ukraine linked to Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea and its 2022 full-scale in-vasion of Ukraine, even as fighting con-tinues to rage on battlefields in Ukraine.

"Russia wants to take the Sea of Azov and Kerch Strait for itself, and so it has built a great gate at the entrance to keep international shipping out while allowing small Russian river vessels in," Ukrainian representative Anton Korynevych told a panel of arbitrators.

The gate he referred to is a bridge built by Russia across the Kerch Strait after the annexation of Cri-mea. The $3.5-billion, 19-km (12-mile) bridge linking the Black and Azov seas carries road and rail traf-fic on separate sec-tions and is vital to sustaining Russia's military operations in southern Ukraine. *—PTI*

Capsule carrying 2 Russians, 1 American heads to Earth

MOSCOW, 23 SEPT

A Russian space capsule undocked from the International Space Station on Monday to take three as-tro-nauts back to Earth, two of them completing a record-long stay on the orbiting laboratory.

The capsule carrying Russians Oleg Kononenko and Nikolai Chub and American Tracy Dyson is expected to land in the vast Kazakhstan steppe about 3 1/2 hours after the undocking.

Kononenko and Chub blasted off for the space station on Sept 15, 2023, and on Friday set the record for the longest continu-ous mission on the ISS. Dyson, in her third mission into outer space, spent six months aboard. Eight astronauts remain on the space station, including Americans Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams,

A Russian space capsule undocked from the International Space Station to take three astronauts back to Earth PHOTO: AP

who have remained long past their scheduled return to Earth. They arrived in June as the first crew of Boeing's new Starliner capsule. But their trip was marred by thruster troubles and helium leaks, and NASA decided it was too risky to return them on Starliner. *—AP*

HARRIS RAISES $27M, PROMISES ECONOMIC SPEECH THIS WEEK

NEW YORK, 23 SEPT

Vice President Kamala Harris raised $27 million at a packed New York City fundraiser on Sunday, her largest fundraising haul since she took over at the top of the ticket from President Joe Biden, according to a Harris campaign aide.

Though Harris has far more money than former President Donald Trump, the money will be needed to compete with pricey advertising by deep-pocketed outside groups that support Trump, said the aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private fundraising details.

The blockbuster fundraiser was held at Cipriani Wall Street in a massive Greek Revival ballroom with over a dozen columns. Much of the crowd stood shoulder to shoul-der as Harris needled Trump for re-fusing to debate her again. Trump has rejected more debates, saying Saturday that "it's just too late." "Voting is already started," he said at a rally in Wilmington, North Carolina. Voters cast the first in-person ballots last week in Min-nesota, South Dakota and Virginia, the states with the first early in-person voting opportunities. About a dozen more states will follow by mid-October. *—AP*

TRUMP SAYS IF HE LOSES, 2024 RUN WILL BE HIS LAST

WASHINGTON, 23 SEPT

Former President Donald Trump said on Sunday that he doesn't "think" he'd run again for president in 2028 if he falls short in his bid to return to the White House in 2024.

"No, I don't. I think that will be, that will be it," Trump said when journalist Sharyl Attkisson asked him if he'd run again.

The comment was notable both because Trump seemed to rule out a fourth bid for the White House and because he rarely admits the possibility he could legitimately lose an election. Trump normally in-sists that could only happen if there were widespread cheating, a false allegation he made in 2020 and he's preemptively made again during his 2024 presidential campaign. Biden bowed out of the race in July following his disastrous debate performance and months of being hammered by Trump and oth-er conservatives as being too old and erratic for the job.

Trump took credit for the development of the Covid-19 vaccines developed during his presidency while also saying "they're doing studies on the vaccines and we're going to find out" if they are safe. *—AP*

AT UN SUMMIT

Haitians lose hope as gang violence surges

PORT-AU-PRINCE, 23 SEPT

As world leaders meeting in the United Nations this week discuss the future of efforts to rein in the gangs strangling Haiti, Haitians are expressing hopelessness that an interna-tional response can turn the tide of violence.

Thus far, a UN-backed force of 400 police from Kenya and about two dozen Jamaican officers have done little to quell the country's gangs, which have terrorised the country since the 2021 assassi-nation of President Jovenel Moise. World leaders have been discussing the next steps in a convoluted efforts to restore order to the Caribbean nation.

The United States has floated the idea of a UN peacekeeping force, but the idea was consid-

Officials said UN-backed force from Kenya and Jamaican officers have done little to quell the country's gangs PHOTO: X@ANADOLUAGENCY

ered too controversial given the introduction of cholera and sexual abuse cases that occurred the last time UN troops were in Haiti.

The deployment of Kenyan forces was, in part, to avoid tensions that may be sparked by sending an-other UN peace-keeping mission. "On the sug-gestion to transit this into a fully UN Peacekeeping mis-sion, we have absolutely no problem with it, if that is the direction the UN security council wants to take," Ruto said.

While Ruto hailed the suc-cesses of the Kenyan forces on Sunday, a recent report by a UN human rights expert said gang violence is spreading across Haiti and that Haitian police still lack the "logistical and technical capacity" to fight gangs.

The ongoing violence has left Haitians like 39-year-old Mario Canteve disillusioned with further inter-national efforts to quell the gangs, say-ing he no longer believes promises by world leaders that they'll be able to change anything in the crisis-stricken nation. Such groups speak to the lack of hope many Haitians have that an international solution can mark a shift in Haiti. Moise Jean-Pierre, a 50-year-old school teacher, recalled past UN missions in Haiti and said such efforts were a "waste of time." *—AP*

6 dead after record rainfall causes floods in Japan

TOKYO, 23 SEPT

At least six people have died and 10 others are missing after heavy rain triggered flooding and land-slides along a penin-sula in Japan that is still recovering from a deadly earthquake at the start of the year.

Public broadcaster NHK and other outlets said on Monday that six people had been con-firmed dead, while the Kyodo news agency said more than 100 communities had been cut off by blocked roads after almost two dozen rivers burst their banks.

Two of the deaths occurred near a landslide-hit tunnel in the city of Wajima, Ishikawa prefecture, which was under-going repairs after being dam-aged in the New Year's Day earthquake.

Elsewhere in Ishikawa, two people were missing after

A house leans as a swollen river undermines the ground in Suzu, Japan on Monday PHOTO: PTI

being swept away and eight others were unac-counted for, Kyodo added.

The Prime Minister, Fumio Kishida, has instructed offi-cials to monitor the damage and cooperate with local authorities as the region was still in the process of recover-ing from January's earth-quake when the rain, caused by an extratropical depres-sion, arrived. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold rallies ₹600 to ₹76,950 per 10 grams

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Gold prices rallied Rs 600 to Rs 76,950 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid a rise in the precious metal rates in international markets. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 76,350 per 10 grams on Friday. In addition, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped Rs 600 to Rs 76,600 per 10 gram from Rs 76,000 in the previous close. Snapping a seven-day winning streak in the local market, silver plunged Rs 1,000 to Rs 90,000 per kilogram due to subdued offtake from industrial units and coin makers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Silver contracts for December delivery declined Rs 1,035, or 1.15 per cent, to Rs 89,100 per kg on the exchange. *—PTI*

Rupee snaps 6-day streak; slips 1P to 83.55 against dollar

MUMBAI, 23 SEPT

The rupee pared its early gains to close lower by 1 paisa at 83.53 (provisional) against the US currency on Monday, snapping its six-day gaining streak due to a strengthening dollar in overseas markets and an uptick in crude oil prices. A decline in India's Services PMI also affected the investor sentiment while gains in domestic equity markets capped losses in the local unit, forex traders said. Earlier in the day, the rupee opened at 83.44 against the greenback, 8 paise higher than its previous close. However, it gave up gains during the day to finally settle at 83.53 (provisional) against the US dollar, 1 paisa lower than its previous close. The rupee had closed at 83.52 on Friday. A decline in India's Services PMI to 58.9 in August from 60.9 in July also contributed to the drop in the rupee, he said. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was up 0.34 per cent. *—PTI*

Unichem board to integrate US biz under single entity

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Drug firm Unichem Laboratories on Monday said its board will meet next week to consider consolidation of its US formulation business under one entity. The board, on 30 September, will consider integration and consolidation of the generics formulations business in the US market of Bayshore Pharmaceuticals LLC into Unichem Pharmaceuticals Inc, it said in a regulatory filing. The initiative is to consolidate all the Ipca Group's US generics formulations business under one entity, it added. Shares of Unichem Laboratories were trading 2.59 per cent down at Rs 628.05 apiece on the BSE. *—PTI*

Aster to invest ₹220 cr to set up hospital in Hyd

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Aster DM Healthcare on Monday said it will invest about Rs 220 crore to set up a new healthcare facility in Hyderabad. The 300-bed facility will cater to the unique healthcare needs of children and women of all ages, the healthcare provider said in a statement. The hospital will offer specialised services in obstetrics, comprehensive gynaecological care and complete neonatal & paediatric care, it added. Aster will be making an investment of around Rs 220 crore on the facility with the first phase of the project expected to be fully functional by mid FY26, it said. Aster DM Healthcare already has a presence in Hyderabad with Aster Prime Hospital, a 158-bed multi-speciality hospital situated at Ameerpet in Hyderabad. *—PTI*

Market hits new all-time high; Sensex jumps 384.30 pts

Nifty rose 148.10 points to close at a record peak of 25,939.05

MUMBAI, 23 SEPT

Domestic equity indices Sensex and Nifty scaled their new record closing high levels on Monday, helped by strong foreign fund inflows and a largely firm trend in Asian markets.

Rallying for the third day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 384.30 points, or 0.45 per cent, to settle at an all-time high of 84,928.61. During the day, it soared 436.22 points, or 0.51 per cent, to hit a fresh lifetime intra-day peak of 84,980.53.

The NSE Nifty rose 148.10 points, or 0.57 per cent, to close at a record peak of 25,939.05. During the day, it zoomed 165.05 points, or 0.63 per cent, to reach a new intra-day all-time high of 25,956.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel, Hindustan Unilever, Kotak Mahindra Bank, UltraTech Cement, Adani Ports, and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers.

ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank, Asian Paints, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, and Larsen & Toubro were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 14,064.05 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.09 per cent to USD 74.55 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark jumped 1,359.51 points, or 1.63 per cent, to settle at an all-time high of 84,544.31 on Friday. During the day, it soared 1,509.66 points, or 1.81 per cent, to hit the momentous intra-day peak of 84,694.46.

The NSE Nifty also surged 375.15 points, or 1.48 per cent, to close at a record 25,790.95 level. During the day, the gauge zoomed 433.45 points, or 1.70 per cent, to reach an all-time intra-day peak of 25,849.25. *—PTI*

Mahindra & Mahindra, Airtel, Hindustan Unilever, Kotak, UltraTech Cement, Adani Ports, and Tata Steel were among the biggest gainers PHOTO: PTI

Vodafone Idea shares trim most of early gains; settle nearly 4%

Shares of Vodafone Idea trimmed most of their sharp early gains and ended nearly 4 per cent higher on Monday after the firm awarded contracts worth about Rs 30,000 crore to Nokia, Ericsson and Samsung for supply of 4G and 5G network equipment for three years. The stock surged 11.73 per cent to Rs 11.71 during the day on the BSE. Later, it ended at Rs 10.83, up 3.34 per cent, giving up most of the early gains. *—PTI*

Asian stocks mixed after Wall street ends record high

HONG KONG, 23 SEPT

Asian stocks were mostly higher on Monday, supported by key rate decisions last week from the US Federal Reserve, Japan, China and Britain.

US futures and oil prices were higher.

Chinese stocks got a lift after the central bank lowered its 14-day reverse repurchase rate to 1.85 per cent from 1.95 per cent on Monday after opting to keep key lending rates unchanged last week. Markets had been anticipating a cut.

The Hang Seng in Hong Kong edged 0.1 per cent higher to 18,281.74 and the Shanghai Composite index added 0.5 per cent to 2,748.99.

South Korea's Kospi climbed 0.3 per cent to close at 2,602.02.

In other dealings early Monday, US benchmark crude oil rose 44 cents to $71.44 per barrel. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIX

NCLT ISSUES NOTICE

The latest petition is by Techjockey Infotech Pvt Ltd PHOTO: SPICEJET

Spicejet faces another insolvency plea from creditor

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Monday issued notice to debt-ridden air carrier SpiceJet over the plea filed by one of its operational creditors.

A two-member NCLT bench, comprising Mahendra Khandelwal and Sanjeev Tanjan, has directed Spicejet to file a reply and list the matter for the next hearing on 14 November.

SpiceJet is already facing several insolvency petitions from creditors, including Willis Lease, Aircastle Ireland Ltd, Wilmington and Celestial Aviation at NCLT and the appellate tribunal NCLAT.

The latest petition is by Techjockey Infotech Pvt Ltd, an operational creditor, filed under section 9 of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, through Karanjawala & Co.

Earlier in June, NCLT had issued notice to SpiceJet over the petition filed by Engine Lease Finance (ELF). Based in Ireland, ELF is the world's leading independent engine financing and leasing company and claimed a payment default of over USD 12 million (around Rs 100 crore).

The NCLT rejected the pleas of Willis Lease Finance and Wilmington Trust. Spicejet settled the case with Celestial Aviation.

The petitions filed by Aircastle and Alterna Aircraft are pending before the insolvency tribunal.

SpiceJet has raised Rs 3,000 crore through the sale of shares to qualified institutional buyers, which will provide a much-needed tailwind for the struggling airline.

Among others, the proceeds will be used for settling liabilities of creditors, including aircraft and engine lessors, engineering vendors and financiers.

The carrier's statutory dues totalled Rs 601.5 crore as of 15 September and net proceeds from the placement will also be utilised towards clearing the dues. *—PTI*

SpiceJet raises ₹3K cr through QIP

Domestic carrier SpiceJet on Monday said it has raised Rs 3,000 crore through a Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP). The QIP, which opened on 16 September and closed on 18 September, received an overwhelming response from qualified investors and got significantly oversubscribed, demonstrating strong confidence in the company's growth prospects. SpiceJet said it will also receive an additional Rs 736 crore from the previous funding round. *—PTI*

Adani Total Gas shares jump over 8% on $375M funding

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Shares of Adani Total Gas Ltd surged more than 8 per cent on Monday after the firm secured USD 375 million funding from global lenders for expansion of its business.

The stock jumped 8.37 per cent to Rs 854.65 on the BSE.

Shares of the firm at the NSE soared 8.40 per cent to Rs 855.

"The maiden financing of USD 375 million executed with international lenders include an initial commitment of USD 315 million with accordion feature to enhance the commitments," the firm said in a statement on Friday.

Five international lenders participated in the initial financing -- BNP Paribas, DBS Bank, Mizuho Bank, MUFG Bank, and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation.

Shares of the firm at the NSE soared 8.40 per cent to Rs 855 PHOTO: X

This shall cater to up to 14 per cent of India's population covering more than 200 million people.

The expansion will deepen the penetration of piped natural gas (PNG) and compressed natural gas (CNG) infrastructure, creating an ecosystem for a gas-based economy.

"Participation from the global lenders reinforces the potential of city gas distribution in its role as transition fuel," said Parag Parikh, CFO of ATGL. *—PTI*

ACCEPTABILITY OF NEV TO RISE BY END OF DECADE

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Majority of new car buyers, who participated in a study, were ready to accept new energy vehicles (NEV) as the only option when considering a purchase by 2030, according to a survey.

The buyers would be willing to pay a premium of up to 49 per cent for an electric vehicle above the cost of a comparable petrol/diesel vehicle, a survey from Urban Science and The Harris Poll has revealed.

Around 83 per cent of the 1,000 prospective Indian buyers covered in the global survey said they will consider buying an NEV by the end of this decade.

The survey conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of Urban Science received inputs from various markets including India, the US, Australia, China and Germany. *—PTI*

Govt steps up stock sale to curb onion prices

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

- The government plans to increase retail sales of onions at a subsidised rate of Rs 35 per kg across India, focusing on cities where prices exceed the average

The government has intensified its efforts to check onion prices by stepping up the sale of buffer stock in wholesale markets, following a spike in retail prices after the recent removal of export duty.

Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare on Monday said the Centre has begun offloading onions from its buffer stock in wholesale markets of Delhi and other key cities, with plans to expand subsidised retail sales nationwide.

The government plans to increase retail sales of onions at a subsidised rate of Rs 35 per kg across India, focusing on cities where prices exceed the national average.

Official data shows retail onion price in Delhi at Rs 55 per kg on September 22, up from Rs 38 per kg a year ago. Prices in Mumbai and Chennai have reached Rs 58 and Rs 60 per kg, respectively.

Regarding tomatoes, Khare said the government would monitor trends and intervene if necessary.

With domestic tur and urad production looking promising and increased pulses imports, Khare expects stable prices of pulses in the coming months.

Ten days back, the government removed USD 550 per tonne minimum export price on onions, while raised import duty on crude palm oil to 20 per cent and on refined sunflower oil to 32.5 per cent. *—PTI*

Govt had removed $550 per tonne minimum export price on onions PHOTO: PTI

EPFO reports highest payroll additions in July

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has reported its highest-ever monthly payroll addition in July 2024, with a 19.94 lakh members joining the ranks.

This highlights a shift in India's employment landscape, reflecting the effectiveness of the Modi Government's transformative schemes aimed at driving job creation and formalising the job market.

The EPFO data indicates that of the new additions, 10.52 lakh are first-time employees, marking a 2.66 per cent increase over June 2024 and a 2.43 per cent rise compared to July 2023.

This uptick in employment showcases an expanding job market and increased opportunities, particularly for youth and women.

India's massive push toward economic growth and job creation has been bolstered by key government initiatives like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, the Startup India movement, the Employment Linked Incentive Scheme, and significant capital expenditure (Capex) drives.

Year-wise net payroll additions further underscore the progress being made: in 2022-23, there were 138.52 lakh net additions, while in 2023-24, this number was 131.48 lakh. Youth employment is leading the surge in formal job creation, with 8.77 lakh young individuals contributing to the net payroll in July 2024 alone.

A key highlight of July 2024 is the rise in female workforce participation. The data shows that 4.41 lakh women joined the formal sector in July, with 3.05 lakh being new joinees. *—ANI*

CREDAI: India's real estate to jump manifold by 2047

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Indian real estate market size is estimated to jump multifold to USD 5-7 trillion by 2047 and may even touch USD 10 trillion driven by rising economic growth and rapid urbanisation, according to a report by CREDAI and Colliers.

Realtors' apex body CREDAI and real estate consultant Colliers India on Monday released a joint report 'Indian Real estate: The Quantum Leap' here at CREDAI-NATCON conference.

"From a 6-8 per cent contribution to the GDP and a market size of USD 0.2 trillion in 2021, the real estate sector in India is expected to grow significantly and reach USD 1 trillion by 2030," the report said.

The CREDAI and Colliers report showed that the market size of Indian real estate by 2047 is estimated to touch USD 3-5 trillion in a pessimistic scenario, USD 5-7 trillion in a realistic scenario and USD 7-10 trillion in an optimistic scenario. Real estate sector's share in India's total GDP is estimated at 14-20 per cent. The consultant expects greater institutionalisation and market consolidation across all real estate segments.

Additionally, the real estate growth narrative will expand beyond the boundaries of large cities and reach multiple smaller cities, it added. *—PTI*

GIFT TO CREATORS

Amazon boosts commission hike for influencers

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

E-commerce platform Amazon on Monday announced an increase in its standard commission income rates across 20 plus sub-categories for over 50,000 content creators engaged with it.

The revised structure will offer content creators 1.5x-2x increased income across a wide range of product categories, including popular choices like fashion, beauty and personal care appliances, home, kitchen, toys, and books, Amazon said.

"This empowers creators to earn more during the peak shopping season and capitalise on the increased consumer demand during the Amazon Great Indian Festival (AGIF)," a company statement said.

The Amazon Great Indian Festival is set to start on 27 September, with 24-hour early access for Prime members.

Apart from the overall increase in standard commission income rates, it has also introduced target-linked incentives of up to 10-15 per cent of revenue generated.

As part of the Amazon Live program, hundreds of creators will run over 1,500 live streams across categories including Mobiles, Home Appliances, Home Decor, Fashion and Beauty among many others for the AGIF (Amazon Great Indian Festival), the statement said.

Director of shopping initiatives for India and emerging markets at Amazon, Zahid Khan said this enhanced support system will not only benefit creators but also translate into a more engaging and rewarding shopping experience for the customers. *—PTI*

Amazon Great Indian Festival is set to start on 27 September PHOTO: X

AIFF chief discusses growth of football with Sikkim CM

GANGTOK, 23 SEPT

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang said that All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Kalyan Chaubey called on him and discussed development of the game in the Himalayan state. "I had the opportunity to meet and engage with Kalyan Chaubey, President of the All India Football Federation (AIFF). Our discussion focused on the development of football in our state, exploring various initiatives that could create better opportunities for aspiring football players," Tamang said in a social media post. Tamang said that he informed Chaubey about the growing popularity of club football culture in Sikkim and stressed the importance of nurturing budding talents to promote the next generation of footballers. During the meeting on Sunday, Chaubey also appreciated the State government's endeavour towards promotion of football in Sikkim and assured the chief minister of full support from the association. *—PTI*

Lancashire CEO praises BCCI over domestic diktat

LONDON, 3 SEPT

The BCCI directing its established players to participate in domestic cricket has been termed "fantastic prioritising" by Lancashire's CEO Daniel Gidney, who accused the English players' agents for facilitating their foray into the lucrative franchise leagues at the expense of the traditional red-ball competition. Gidney feels these agents threaten the future of the English County Championship. The BCCI had mandated all international players, except for seniors like Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah, to play in tournaments such as Ranji and Duleep Trophy when they are not busy with national commitments, the move highlighting the board's emphasis on the role of domestic cricket. *—AP*

Richard Carapaz withdraws from cycling worlds

ZURICH, 23 SEPT

Former Olympic champion Richard Carapaz of Ecuador has withdrawn from the cycling world championship road race because of an urgent family issue. Carapaz, who was the best climber at this year's Tour de France, said in a statement Monday that he was travelling home to Ecuador to be with his daughter who underwent emergency surgery. "Fortunately, the surgery went well. However, she still requires care," Carapaz said. "Due to this family emergency, I have not been able to train for several days and my condition is not up to what Ecuador deserves, neither physically nor mentally." The 31-year-old Carapaz won the road race at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 but was not selected to compete at the Paris Games this summer to defend his title. *—AP*

Australia football ropes in Popovic as new head coach

SYDNEY, 23 SEPT

Football Australia has appointed former Asian Champions League winning manager Tony Popovic as the new head coach of the Australian men's team until the end of the 2026 World Cup. Popovic, 51, replaces Graham Arnold, who stepped down last week after an indifferent start to the Socceroos' World Cup qualification in the Asia zone. Popovic is best known for guiding the Western Sydney Wanderers to the Asian Champions League title in 2014, and has also had successful stints with the Perth Glory and Melbourne Victory in Australia's A-League. Popovic had stints as an assistant at Crystal Palace and coached at clubs in Turkey and Greece. Popovic, who won 58 caps for Australia as a defender, decided not to renew his contract with the Victory for the upcoming A-League. *—AP*

Indian teams at the presentation ceremony of the 45th Chess Olympiad in Budapest *PHOTO: PTI*

FINALLY I'M GLAD TO WIN AFTER 20 YRS: GM HARIKA

Men's, women's teams clinch their maiden titles in Olympiad

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT

Veteran D Harika had to endure a long wait to realise her dream of winning the prestigious Chess Olympiad title but she was finally glad to have achieved it even though she was not satisfied with her performance in the event in Budapest.

India on Sunday scripted history in the Chess Olympiad as its men's and women's teams clinched their maiden titles in a rare clean sweep of gold medals after beating Slovenia and Azerbaijan respectively in the final round of matches here.

For the women's team, Harika, 33, was at her technical best, striking on the top board, while the 18-year-old Divya Deshmukh outclassed Govhar Beydullayeva to confirm her individual gold medal on the third board. "Definitely for me it is much more emotional than these people (teammates), I have been playing for 20 years to see the gold medal and finally I am glad we saw it," Harika said.

"I am extremely happy and proud of the girls, youngsters came up in the team and they did extremely well. "May be my performance is not satisfactory but the team gold made me forget everything, I am glad that we managed to come back strongly after the setback," she added. Divya, who won the World Junior Girls' chess championship in Gandhinagar recently, turned out to be the mainstay for the Indian women's team that bagged the historic gold medal. "It started off quite well, but in the middle we had a few setbacks and I am really proud of the way my team and I handled it. We fought back with resilience and we are finally here with the gold medal," Divya said.

Playing on the third board, Divya ended the event with a stupendous 9.5 points out of her 11 games and her performance also netted her the individual gold medal as the best performer on her board. Tania Sachdev, who did not get to play many games, helped the team get off to a good start playing on board five. *—PTI*

Indian chess right up there: Hungarian GM Rapport

Hungarian Grandmaster Richard Rapport, who was one among the two players to manage a draw against an unstoppable **D Gukesh** in the Chess Olympiad, is in awe of India's phenomenal rise in the sport but still wouldn't declare the teenager an outright favourite for the world crown. The reason being that the eagerly-awaited showdown in November-December is a "different" level in the difficulty meter and Gukesh will have an experienced rival in Ding Liren to counter at the showpiece. For now, the 18-year-old is celebrating India's maiden Olympiad gold in Budapest where he was the star of the campaign, remaining unbeaten through the event with eight wins and two draws. Rapport was the first to hold Gukesh during a seemingly invincible run and speaking to PTI, the 28-year-old lauded the youngest ever challenger to the world title. The two are likely to face off once against next month during the Tech Mahindra Global Chess League (GCL) in London. *—PTI*

MATCH WITH MALDIVES

SAFF U-17: India look to rejig players

THIMPHU, 23 SEPT

Having already booked their spot in the semi-finals, India will eye the top spot in Group A when they take on Maldives in the SAFF U17 Championship here on Tuesday.

In their opening match last Friday, Ishfaq Ahmed's boys saw off Bangladesh 1-0 in a repeat of last year's final as Sumit Sharma Brahmacharimayum headed in the winning goal in the 92nd minute. Sunday's 1-1 draw between Bangladesh and Maldives meant that India qualified for the semi-final with a game to spare.

Ahmed suggested that might allow him to rotate the squad and give valuable game time to more players, while resting a few starters from the first game. "Well, since we have already qualified, I want to make sure the other players get some game time as well. All our players are important. There are a few niggles as well. We want to win this match and top the group," he said.

The Indian squad was in attendance for the match between Bangladesh and Maldives. However, Maldives, with a rare attacking opportunity, equalised through their captain Mohamed Ilan Imran in the 79th minute and held on for the point.

The way things stand in Group A, Maldives require a draw to qualify for the semi-finals, while Bangladesh will hope for an Indian win by a margin of more than one goal. Should India win 1-0 against Maldives, it would come down to disciplinary points between Bangladesh and Maldives to determine the group runners-up. *—PTI*

Indian players pose for a photograph on Monday *PHOTO: X/@MAIDAANPK01*

Pratyasa Ray *PHOTO: X/@MANAS_MUDULI*

Swimmer Pratyasa to get Ekalabya Puraskar this year

BHUBANESWAR, 23 SEPT

Pratyasa Ray, a rising star in swimming, was selected for the prestigious Ekalabya Puraskar for 2024, an official said.

Ray secured six medals - four gold, one silver and a bronze - in the Khelo India University Games in Guwahati in February this year.

The Ekalabya Puraskar committee comprising jury members drawn from various sectors were unanimous in selecting Ray for the prestigious award at a meeting here.

Ray will be awarded a cash prize of Rs 7 lakh, along with a citation at a ceremony to be held at a later date.

Sprinter Dondapati Mrutyam Jayaram and badminton player Tanvi Patri will also be felicitated for their remarkable performances in various international and national-level events in their respective fields. *—PTI*

Spanish league: Barca get perfect start with 6th win

MADRID, 23 SEPT

Barcelona extended their perfect start to the Spanish league season but lost goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen with a serious knee injury.

Barcelona routed host Villarreal 5-1 on Sunday night to pick up its sixth straight victory in the competition, but saw captain Ter Stegen leave the match on a stretcher just before halftime after his right knee buckled when he fell awkwardly after going up for a ball crossed into the area.

Barcelona president Joan Laporta said the injury appeared to be a torn ligament but more tests would be conducted. Local media reports said Ter Stegen went from the stadium to the hospital in an ambulance, and left the hospital in a wheelchair.

"This injury makes us sad. I think the injury will be huge but we have to wait for more information," Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said. "We have to accept it. It's not easy. It was an accident. It's very tough."

Players from both teams immediately called for medical assistance after Ter Stegen fell to the ground in pain. He was replaced by reserve goalkeeper Iñaki Peña.

Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, who missed most of last season with a similar injury, showed his support to Ter Stegen with a message on X, saying that it hurt to see his colleague leave the field like that and that he hoped he would recover soon.

It was the latest injury to Flick's Barcelona, which is already without Dani Olmo, Frenkie de Jong, Gavi and Ronald Araujo, among others. Robert Lewandowski scored a pair of first-half goals and Raphinha added two after the interval, with Pablo Torre also scoring for the Catalan club in the second half.

Lewandowski now has six goals from the first six matches and leads the league in scoring. *—AP*

Barca players celebrate after winning the match *PHOTO: X/@FCBarcelona*

Alcaraz clinches Laver Cup for Team Europe

Carlos Alcaraz lifts the tile on behalf of Team Europe on Monday *PHOTO: X/@THETENNISLETTER*

BERLIN, 23 SEPT

Four-time Grand Slam champion Carlos Alcaraz overcame Taylor Fritz 6-2, 7-5 as Team Europe rallied to beat Team World 13-11 and win the Laver Cup.

Alcaraz broke the U.S. Open runner-up Fritz in the 11th game and then closed out victory on serve, sparking celebrations as the Europe team rejoiced with captain Björn Borg in Berlin. Team World was favorite to win the Laver Cup for a third straight time after leading 8-4 on points heading into the last of the three days.

Europe began the comeback Sunday when Alcaraz and Casper Ruud won the doubles 6-2, 7-6 (6) against American pair Ben Shelton and Frances Tiafoe. But Shelton then downed Australian Open finalist Daniil Medvedev 6-7 (6), 7-5, 10-7 to move the World team into pole position.

Carlos Alcaraz *PHOTO: X/@THETENNISLETTER*

Tiafoe, who reached the US Open semifinals, could have sealed it for them but he lost to French Open finalist Alexander Zverev 6-7 (5), 7-5, 10-5, setting up the decider between Alcaraz and Fritz.

The Laver Cup is formatted like golf's Ryder Cup with the first team to 13 points winning the contest. Each of the four matches on Sunday was worth three points. Europe's only win in Saturday's four matches came from Alcaraz, who won the French Open and Wimbledon this year. *—AP*

South Africa deny Afg sweep of ODI series

SHARJAH, 23 SEPT

South Africa denied Afghanistan a series sweep with seven-wickets win in the third and final cricket ODI.

Aiden Markram's unbeaten 69 led South Africa to 170-3 with 17 overs to spare in the one-day international after Afghanistan collapsed for the first time in the series and was bowled out for 169 in 34 overs. Afghanistan won the series 2-1. An inexperienced South Africa was dismissed for 106 and 134 in the first two games, but Markram paced the chase well on yet another slow wicket at Sharjah Cricket Stadium with a gritty 67-ball innings.

"Feeling very happy with the series win," Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi said. "I would be more happy if we would have won this match." He called the three runouts of his team's batters "a big reason why we didn't finish on top."

"We were quite clinical with the bat," Bavuma said. "In terms of series, not what we planned for, (but) the guys will take a lot of experience and learning from it."

Afghanistan was missing its ace leg-spinner Rashid Khan because of a hamstring injury. Bavuma (22) and Tony de Zorzi (26) provided South Africa with a solid start of 40 and controlled the power play before Bavuma was undone by off-spinner Ghazanfar and clean bowled.

Markram and Tristan Stubbs controlled the chase with their match-winning 90-run stand vw with Stubbs 26 not out. *—PTI*

SINGAPORE GP

Daniel Ricciardo F1 career on the brink

SINGAPORE, 23 SEPT

Daniel Ricciardo was once tipped as a future Formula 1 champion. His last act in F1 might be playing spoiler in the title race.

The Australian's late rally at the Singapore GP on Sunday snatched the bonus point for the fastest lap away from title challenger Lando Norris and helped out Max Verstappen.

Ricciardo drives for RB, the sister team of Verstappen's Red Bull, and has previously been a teammate to both Norris and Verstappen.

The lap put the visibly emotional Ricciardo — a popular figure in F1 — in the spotlight ahead of a widely expected decision to replace him with RB's reserve driver Liam Lawson. It generated controversy, too.

Daniel Ricciardo drives for Red Bull *PHOTO: X/@DIEGOMIRANDAE*

Ricciardo finished outside the top 10 so the point isn't credited to him in the standings, and he finished further back — in 18th place — because he stopped for fresh tyres before the lap. McLaren chief executive Zak Brown objected.

Ricciardo's F1 career looked like it might be over in 2022 when Norris soundly beat him at McLaren. After a stint as a Red Bull reserve, he got another chance last year when RB, then branded AlphaTauri, fired the underperforming Nyck de Vries midseason. It hasn't really worked out, with only four top-10 finishes in 25 races. Even more than for his eight wins, the last of them in 2021, the Australian was famed for his easy-going manner and sense of humour and became a standout face of the "Drive To Survive" Netflix series, which brought F1 to a new audience and sparked a boom in interest in the United States. *—AP*